A very excellēt & swete exposition vpon the xxiij. Psalme of Dauid called in Latine:

Dominus regit me, &c.

¶ Translated oute of hye Almayne into Englyshe by Wyles Couerdale.

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The.xxii. psalme of Dauid called in Latine

Dominus regit me, et nihil

i The LORDE is my shepeherde, I shall lacke nothynge.

ii He fedeth me in a grene pasture, and leadeth me to the fresh watet.

iii He quyckeneth my soule, and bringeth me forth in the waye of ryghteousnesse, for hys names sake.

iiii Though I walke in the valley of the shadowe of death, yet feare I no euell, for thou arte wyth me: Thy staffe and thy shepehooke do comforte me

v Thou prepareſt a table before me agaynste myne enemyes, thou anoyntest my head wyth oyle, and fyllest my cuppe full.

vi Oh let thy louynge kyndnesse and mercye followe me all the dayes of my lyfe, that I maye dwell in the house of the LORD for euer.

¶ An exposition vpon the .xxii. Psalme.

IN this Psalme doth Dauid and euery christen hart geue thankes & prayse vnto God for his most principal benefit, namely, for the preachyng of his dear & holy word, wherby we are called, accepted, and nõbred amonge the multitude, which is the cõgregacion or church of God: where onely (and in no place els) the pure doctrine, the true knowlege of Gods wyll, and the ryght seruice of God is founde and had. The effect of this Psalme

But this same noble treasure doth holy Dauid prayse and extol maruaylous excellently with goodly, swete, fayre, & pure wordes, yee & that with lykenesses, borowed out of the Gods seruice of the olde Testament.

ffyrst, he lykeneth hymselfe to a shepe, whom God hymselfe (as a faythfull diligent shepherde) doth wonderous well take hede vnto, fedeth hym in a pleasaunt grene pasture, whiche stõdeth full of good thicke grasse, where ther is abundaunce also of freshe water, & no scarcenesse. Item he lykeneth God also vnto suche a shepherde, as with his staf leadeth & bryngeth the shepe the playne right way, that it cã not go amysse, and defẽdeth A shepe

The shepherde

hys flocke so wyth the shepehooke, that the wolfe can not break in. After thys doth he make hymselfe a geste, for whom God prepareth a table, where he fyndeth both strength and comforte, refreshynge and ioye, and that plenteously.

A geste

And thus the Prophete geueth ỳ worde of God diuerse names, calleth it goodly pleasaunt grene grasse, freshe water, the ryght waye, a staffe, a shephooke, a table, balme or pleasaunt oyle, and a cuppe that is alwaye full. And thys he doth not without a cause: for the power of Gods worde is manyfolde ffor why? Lyke as a shepe in a fayre pleasaũt medowe, besyde the grene grasse and freshe water in the presẽce of hys shepherde (which leadeth it wyth the staffe or rodde, so that it can not go astraye: and defendeth it so with the shepehoke that no harme can happẽ vnto it) hath hys foode & pleasure in al safegarde. Or lyke as a mã lacketh nothynge ỳ fytteth at a table, where ther is plenty of meate and drynke, and al maner of cõforte & gladnesse: So muche moze, they that be ỳ shepe of thys shepherd (wherof thys psalme syngeth) lacke no good thynge, are rychely prouyded for, not only in soule but also in body. As Christ sayeth in the sixte of Mathew: Seke fyrst ỳ kyngdome of God, and the ryghteousnesse

The word of God hath many names.

therof

therof, ſo ſhal all theſe thynges be myniſtred vnto you. ffor as they ỳ wante bodely foode lyue in greate ſtraytneſſe and penſyfneſſe, not beynge able to fulfyl the bodyes requeſt in thys behalfe: euen ſo alſo thoſe ỳ wante thys wholſome and neceſſarye word of god, can not reioyce nor be pacyfyed inwardly. Yee euen as bread and wyne refreſh a mans fleſhy harte, and make hym toyfull: euen ſo the worde of God quyckeneth & refreſſheth a mans ſoule inwardly.

ffor whan the worde of God is truly & ſyncerely preached, loke how many dyuerſe names the prophete geueth it here, ſo many commodyties and frutes doth it bringe. Unto them that are diligent and earneſt to heare it (whom oure LORDE God knoweth onely for hys owne ſhepe) it is a pleaſaũt grene graſſe, a freſhe water, where with they are ſatiſſyed and refreſhed. It kepeth them alſo in the ryghte waye, and preſerueth thẽ, that no myſſortune nor harme happen vnto them. Moreouer, it is vnto thẽ a cõtinuall wealth, where ther is abũdaunce of meate & drynke, and all maner of ioye and pleaſure. That is, they are not onely inſtructe and gyded, refreſhed, ſtrengthed and comforted by the worde of God, but euer more & more preſerued in the ryght waye, defended in all

The preachynge of gods wod bringeth proſperite

maner of trouble both of body and soule. And fynally they haue ỹ victory & preuayle agaynste all temptacyons and troubles, wherof they muste abyde ryghte many, as the fourth verse doth specifye. Shortly, they lyue in all maner of safegarde, as they, vnto whome no myssortune can happen, for as much as theyr shepherde doth fede them and preserue them.

The doctrine to be taken of this psalm

Therfore shulde we take instruccion out of thys Psalme, not to despyse ỹ worde of God, but gladlye to heare, and learne the same, to loue it, and to make muche of it, & to resorte vnto ỹ lytle flock, where we maye haue it. And agayne on ỹ other syde, to flye and eschue those that do blaspheme and persecute it. For where thys blessed lyght doth not shyne, there is nother prosperite nor healthe, nother strength, nor comforte, eyther in body or soule, but vtter dysquietnesse, terroure and dispayre, specially whan trouble, dystresse, and paynfull death is at hande.

Esaye. 57. How be it the vngodly (as ỹ prophete sayeth) haue neuer rest, whether they be in welth or wo. For yf they be in prosperite, thã are they presumptuous, proude, and hyghe mynded, forget oure LORDE god vtterly, boaste, & crake onely of theyr owne power, ryches, wysdome. &c. And take thought beside, how they

they maye maynteyn and increace thesame, and how they may persecute and oppresse other men that lye in theyr wayes. But yf the leafe turne aboute with thē, as doutlesse it must nedes do at the last: (For that swete virgin Marye is a very sure prophetisse, which yet hath not fayled in hyr songe) thē are they of all the moost miserable & careful lest people, which immediatly fall to despayre and mistrust. What ayleth them? They knowe not where nor how they shall seke comforte, seynge they haue not ẏ worde of God, which onely teacheth ẏ ryght waye how to be pacient, and to haue a good hope, euen in aduersite. Roma. xv. Thys thynge ought to warn vs & moue vs, that we esteme nothynge more excellent nor worthye vpon earth, than thys benefyte, namely to haue ẏ deare blessed worde, and that we can be in a place, where it may be frelye preached, and professed openlye. A Christen mā therfore ẏ belongeth vnto a church, wherein the worde of god is taught, as oft as he goeth in, shuld thynke vpon thys Psalme, & out of a ioyfull harte wyth the prophete to geue God thākes for hys vnoutspeakable grace, that he hath set hym (as hys owne shepe) in a pleasaunt grene medowe, where ther is plentye of good grasse and fresh water. That is, that

Deposuit potētes de sede, & diuites dimisit inanes.

An ensample for vs.

he maye be in a place where he maye heare & learne the worde of God, & conceaue ryche comforte therout, both in bodye, and soule.

Thys blessed Dauid dyd well vnderstonde, how worthy a treasure it is, whan it maye so be had, therfore can he boast & singe so well of it, & magnifye thys benefite aboue all that is in onye estymacion or worshippe vpō earth. At hym oughte we to learne thys science, and (accordynge to hys ensample) not onely to be thankfull vnto God oure louynge and faythfull shepherde, & to magnifye his vnoutspeakeable gyft, which he of very louynge kyndnesse hath geuen vs (as Dauid doth here in the fyrste fyue verses,) but also earnestly to desyre and pray hym (as he doth in the last verses,) that we maye abyde by thys ryches, and neuer to fal away from hys holy Christen churche.

What we ought to learne here of Dauid.

And such a prayer is exceadynge necessarye: ffor we are very weake, and (as the Apostle saynt Paule sayeth) we carye thys treasure aboute in earthen vessels. The deuell also our aduersary beareth deadly hate vnto vs for thys treasures sake. Therfore doth he not rest, but goeth aboute as a roarynge Lyon, & seketh how he maye deuoure vs. Besyde all thys he hath a quarel vnto vs, because of our olde sacke which we carye

2. Cor. 4.

yet vpon

yet vpõ oure neckes, wherin ther be yet also dyuerse concupiscences and synnes. Moze ouer, the deare flocke of Chriſte is ſpotted & fyled with ſo many horrible offences (oz ſklaũders) that because of the ſame ther do many fall awaye frõ thẽ. Therfoze (I ſaye) it is neceſſary that we prayе, and put thys vncorrupt doctryne ſtyll in practiſe, & defẽd oure ſelues therwith agaynſt all ſklaũders, that we maye cõtinue vnto ỹ ẽde & be ſaued.

Thys madde and blynde worlde knoweth vtterly nothynge of thys treaſure and precious ſtone, but ymagyneth onely (euen as a ſwyne oz vnreaſonable beaſt) how they maye here fyll the belly: Oz els (whan it cõmeth to the poynt) they followlyes & ypocriſye: As foz the truthe and fayth, they let it paſſe. Therfoze do they ſynge no Pſalme vnto God foz hys holy worde, but rather (whan he offreth it vnto them) they blaſpheme it, and condemne it foz hereſye. And as foz thoſe that teache it, oz wyl be knowen of it, the worlde perſecuteth them, and putteth thẽ to death, lyke as yf they were deceauers, and the moſt vngracyous wretches ỹ are in the worlde. It ſhalbe good therfoze foz thys ſmall flocke to knowlege ſuche a benefyte, & wyth the prophete to ſynge a Pſalme oz ſonge of thankeſgeuyng vnto God foz it.

The blindneſſe of ỹ worlde.

Of them ꝑ wolde, and can not haue the woꝛde of God.

But what ſaye ye of them that can not haue ꝑ pꝛeachynge of Gods woꝛde? As namely, they that dwell here and there amonge tyꝛauntes and enemyes of the truthe? No doute, whereas the woꝛde of God is pꝛeached, there can it not paſſe awaye wythout frute, as Eſay ſayeth in the.lv. Chap. The good chꝛiſten people alſo of the ſame place haue one vauntage, which in dede is deare vnto them. ffoꝛ they that be Chꝛiſten men, cõũte it a very great thynge, that they may be in a place where ꝑ woꝛde of God is freely and openly taught and knowleged, and the ſacramentes myniſtred after Chꝛiſtes inſtitucion. But as foꝛ theſe, they be ſowẽ very thynne. The falſe chꝛiſten are alwaye mo then the good. The great multitude careth nothynge foꝛ Gods woꝛde, nother do they knowlege it foꝛ a benefyte, that they may hear it without al harme & parel. Yee they are ſoone fylled and weery of it, and eſteme it but a payne to heare it, and to receaue the holy ſacrament.

Agayne, they ꝑ ſuffre vnder tyꝛauntes, complaynedaye and nyght, and long greatly foꝛ it. And yf a ſmal moꝛſel of oure bꝛead that Chꝛiſte hath geuen vs ſo rychely doth come vnto them, they receaue it wyth great ioye and thankfulneſſe, and do them ſelues

muche

muche good withall, whereas oure swyne in the meane seasō hauynge ꝑ worthy bread them selues so rychely, and many whole baskettes full therof, cā not reache vnto it, they are so weery of it. Yee they cast it downe, walowe them selues therin, treade it vnder theyr fete, and runne ouer it.

Weenware weery of ꝑ worde of God.

Therfore goeth it euē after ꝑ prouerbe. Whā a thynge beginneth to be comune, it is nomore set by, but despysed, be it neuer so precious. And suche Prouerbes are specially founde true in ꝑ worde of God. Where men haue it, there wyl they not away withall. Agayne, where men haue it not, there wolde they be glad to haue it. Where men haue a church at theyr dores wherin ꝑ word of God is taught, there go they vp & downe in the market in the preachynge tyme, and lurcke about the graues. Where they be ten or twentye myle from it, there wold they be glad to go with the multitude, and to passe ouer with them vnto the house of God with toyfulnesse, and thankesgeuynge, as it is in the .xli. Psalme.

Therfore shortelye thys is myne answere vnto the question, cōcernyng thē that dwel vnder tyraūtes: Blessed be they which are now scattered abrode vnder the Turke or Pope, beynge destitute of Gods worde, & wolde

Of them ꝑ dwelvnder tyrauntes.

wolde yet be glad wyth all theyr hartes to haue it, & in the meane season receaue wyth thankesgeuynge suche morsels as they can get, tyll the meale be better. Nowe yf they be not farre from the place where the worde of God is preached, and the blessed sacrament mynystred accordyng vnto Christes institucion, they maye well go thyther, & enioye the same treasure, lyke as many do, and are therfore punyshed of theyr wycked rulers, both in body, and goodes. But yf they dwel farre frō suche places, yet do they not ceasse at ỹ leest to sighe therafter. No doute Christ oure LORDE wyll heare theyr sighynge, & in processe of tyme wyl he turne back theyr captyuyte. Agayne, vnhappye, yee and vnhappie agayna are they, that haue this treasure plenteouslye at theyr dores, and yet care not for it. On them shall the word of Christ be fulfylled where he sayeth. Many shall come from the easte, and west, & shall syt wyth Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kyngdome of heauen, but the chyldrē of the kyngdome shalbe cast out.

Mathei. 8

&c. Let thys be sayde for an introduccion. Nowe wyll we shortly go ouer the Psalme.

¶ The LORDE is my shepherde, I shall lacke nothynge.

FYrst of all the prophet and euery faythfull hart, calleth God hys shepherde. Nowe though ỳ scripture geueth God many louynge names, Yet thys whiche the Prophete geueth here vnto God, is a much more swete and gracyous name, where he calleth hym a shepherde, and sayeth: The LORD is my shepherde. It is very comfortable whan the scripture calleth God our hope, oure strength, oure stonye rocke, our castell, our shelde, our cõforte, our deliuerer, our kynge. &c. For verely he declareth the thynge so styll in dede vnto his owne, that he is euen so as ỳ scripture describeth hym. But exceadynge cõfortable is it that he is called here (and many tymes els in the scripture) a shepeherde. For in this only word Shepeherde, is almost all comprehẽded together, what good and comfortable thynge so euer is spoken of God.

A swete name.

Therfore doth the prophete speake thys worde wyth a ioyfull and sorowlesse hart, whych is full of fayth, and for very great gladnesse & cõforte, exceadeth. And sayeth not: The LORDE is my strẽgth, castel. &c.

The cause ỳ moued ỳ prophet to cal God his shepherde.

Whiche

Whiche were a maruaylous comfortable sayenge: But the LORDE is my shepherde As yf he wolde say: Yf the LORDE be my shepherde, and I his shepe, then am I wonderous well prouided for, both in body & soule, he shall get me a competent lyuynge, he shall defende me & kepe me fro myssortune, he shal care for me, he shall helpe me out of all trouble, he shall comfort me, he shall strengthe me. &c. Summa, he shall do for me what so euer a good shepherde ought to do. All these benefites and mo doth he cõprehẽde in this onely woorde Shepherde, as he expoundeth it hymselfe immediatly, where he sayeth: I shall lacke nothynge. Besydes this some of the other names which ỳ scripture ascribe vnto God, sounde partly to glorious and to hye, & bryngе in a maner a feare with them, whã men heare thẽ to be named. As whã ỳ scripture calleth God our LORDE, Kynge, Maker. &c. Of such a nature is not this worde Shepherde, but soundeth very frendly, and vnto thẽ ỳ be godly, it bryngeth in a maner a confidence, cõforte and trust with it whã they reade or hear it, lyke as this worde father, and other mo, whã they be appropriated vnto God.

A very cõfortable similitude.

Therfore is this one of ỳ most louyng and cõfortable similitudes (& yet very cõmẽ) in the

in the scripture, that it lykeneth ỹ maiesty of god, to a vertuous, faythful, or (as Christ sayth) a good shepherde: and vs poore, weake, and wretched synners to a shepe.

Now can not thys cõfortable & louynge similitude be better vnderstande, thã to go into the creatures themselues (wherout the prophetes toke thys & such other lyke similitudes,) and to learne diligently thereby, what the condiciõ and property of a naturall shepe is, and the office, labour and diligence of a good shepherde. Who so taketh good hede therunto, maye not onely wyth ease vnderstande this and other similitudes in the scripture concernynge the shepherde and the shepe: but also they shalbe vnto him exceadynge swete and comfortable.

The condicion of a shepe.

A shepe must lyue only by the helpe, defence and diligẽce of hys shepherde: as soone as it leseth hym, it is compassed about with all maner of parell, and must nedes perysh: for it can not helpe it selfe. For why, it is a poore, weake and innocent beast, that can nother fede nor gyde it selfe, nor fynde the ryght waye, nor kepe it selfe agaynst ony vnhappyneſſe or misfortune. Sauynge this that of nature it is fearfull, flyeth & goeth astraye. And yf it go but a lytle out of the waye, and come from hys shepherde, it is

not

not possible for it selfe to fynde hym agayne, but runneth euer farther and farther from him And though it come to other shepherdes and shepe, yet is it nothynge helped therwith. For it knoweth not ẏ voyce of straũge shepherdes, therfore flyeth it from them, and runneth so longe astraye, tyll the wolfe rauysh it, or tyll it perysh some other wayes.

The propertie of a shepe.

Neuerthelesse as weake a beaste as it is, yet hath it thys condicion, that wyth all diligẽce it bydeth with his owne shepherde, and seketh comforte at hys helpe and defẽce: And how or whether so euer he leadeth it, it followeth. And yf it can but be with hym, it careth for nomore, nother feareth it ony mã, but is carelesse and mery, for it lacketh nothynge. It hath also thys good vertue in it, whiche is well to be marked: (for Christ doth specially prayse the same in hys shepe) thys vertue, I saye, it hath, that it wyll be earnest and sure to heare and knowe the voyce of hys shepherde, and ordreth it selfe therafter, and wyl for nothynge go from it, but followeth strayght the same. Agayne, it regardeth no straunge shepherdes voyce. And though they call and whistle vppon it neuer so frendly, yet careth not it therfore: much lesse doth it followe them.

The office

Agayne, this is ẏ office of a good shepherde,

herde, that he doth not only prouyde for his shepe pasture, and other mo thynges that belonge therto, but defendeth them also that no harme chaunce vnto them. Besydes this he taketh diligent hede that he lese none. Yf ony go astraye, he runneth after it, seketh it, and fetcheth it agayne. As for such as be ponge, feble, and sicke, he dealeth gently wt them, kepeth them, holdeth them vp, and caryeth thē, tyll they be olde, strōge & whole. &c

of a shepherde.

Euen thus goeth it also in ỳ spirituall shepfolde, that is to saye, in the flocke of Christ. Loke how lytle a naturall shepe can kepe, gyde, rule, saue or defēde it selfe against daunger and myssortune (for it is a feble and wapenlesse beast:) So lytle cā we poore, weak, and miserable people kepe & rule our selues spiritually, walke and endure in the ryght waye, or of our owne strēgth to defēde vs agaynst all euel, and to get vs helpe and comforte in trouble and distresse.

How it goeth in ỳ shepfolde of Christ.

Sor how shulde he haue skyll to gyde hym selfe after a godly fashion, ỳ knoweth nothynge of God, that is conceaued and borne in synne (as we all are), and of nature the chylde of wrath, and the enemye of God? How shuld we fynd the ryght waye and cōtinue therin, seynge that (as ỳ prophet Esay sayeth) we can do nothynge but go astray.

The misery of oure nature.

Howe is it poſſible that we ſhulde defende our ſelues from the dyuell (which is a prince and lorde of this worlde, whoſe preſoners alſo we be euery one,) ſeynge that with all oure power and myghte, we can not do ſo muche as to hynder a ſmale leafe to hurte vs, or a poore flee from greuynge vs? Why wyll we poore wretched people boaſte ſo muche of great comforte, helpe, and counſell agaynſt ỹ iudgemẽt of God, agaynſt Gods wrath, and euerlaſtynge death, ſeyng that by our ſelues and other, we haue experience dayly and hourely, how we can nother counſell, nor comforte our ſelues in ſmal bodely neceſſityes?

A playne cõpariſon.

Therfore conclude thus hardely: As lytle as a natural ſhepe can helpe it ſelfe in the thynges that be leeſt of all, but muſte loke for all benefites at his ſhepherdes hãde: much leſſe can a man rule, comforte, helpe or geue counſell vnto hymſelfe in thynges belongynge to ſaluacion, but muſte loke for all ſuch at ỹ only hand of God his ſhepherd, wich to fulfyl ony thyng for hys ſhepe that is to be done, is a thouſande tymes more wyllynge and diligent, then ony other vertuous ſhepherde in the worlde.

Chriſte is our ſhepherde.

As for thys ſhepherde of whom ỹ prophete had ſpoken ſo longe before, it is euen

Chriſt

Chryst oure louynge master, which is farre an other maner of shepherde then Moyses, which is harde and extreme vnto his shepe, & dryueth them backe in to the wylderneſſe, where they fynde nother pasture, nor water, but playne scarceneſſe, Exod.iii. But Chryste is the gracyous and louynge shepherde, which rūneth after the famyshed and loſt shepe in the wylderneſſe, and seketh it there: And whā he findeth it, he taketh it vp gladly vpon his shulders. Luc.xv. Yee & geueth his lyfe also for his shepe. Jo.x. This muſt nedes be a louynge shepeherde. Who wolde not be glad then to be a shepe of his?

The shepherdes voyce.

This shepherdes voyce wherwith he speaketh and calleth vnto his shepe, is the holy gospell, wherby we be taught that we optayne grace, remiſſiō of ſynnes and euerlaſtyng saluacion, not by Moses law (wherthorow he putteth vs in ỹ more feare, drede and dispayre, whiche were to fearful, to sore afrayed and dispayred to muche afore,) but by Chryſt, whiche is the shepherde and byſshoppe of our soules. i. Pet.ii. whiche hath sought vs myserable and loſt shepe, and fetched vs out of the wylderneſs, that is to say, from the lawe, from synne, frō death, from the power of the deuell, from euerlaſtynge damnacion: And in that he gaue hys lyfe

for vs, optayned he vs grace, remission of synnes, cõforte, helpe and strength agaynst the deuell and all myssfortune, yee and euerlastynge lyfe also. This is now vnto the shepe of Chryste, a louynge swete voyce, which they are hartely glad to heare, which they knowe ryghte well, and ordre them selues therafter. As for a straunge voyce that soundeth otherwyse, they nother knowe it, nor herken vnto it, but auoyde & flye awaye from it. &c. Joh. x.

The pasture. The pasture wherwith Chryste fedeth his shepe, is also the comfortable gospell, wherby the soules are fed and strengthed, kepte from errour, comforted in all temptacions and troubles, defẽded agaynste the craft and power of the deuell, and fynally delyuered out of all trouble. Neuertheless for as muche as his shepe are not all alyke stronge, but some yet lost, and scattred here and there abrode, woũded, sycke, ponge and feble, he doth not therofre cast them awaye but hathe much more respecte vnto them, & careth more dilygẽtly for them, then for the other, that haue not suche nede. ffor as the prophete Ezechiel sayeth in ỹ. xxxiiii. Chap. He seketh them that be lost, bryngeth together them that be scattred abrode, byndeth vp suche as be wounded, loketh to them that

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be sycke. And the weake lambes that be but yonge at the fyrste (sayeth Esaye) he taketh vp into his armes, and beareth them, and suche as be with yonge ones, doth he dryue forth fayre and softly. All this doth our louynge mayster Christ by the office of preachynge and distributynge of the holy sacrament, as it is ofte and with many wordes taught in other places. ffor to set it forth here worde by word as nede shulde requyre, it were to lõge. The prophete also hym selfe wyll declare it afterwarde in the Psalme.

We haue ben deceaued.

By this then maye we easely perceaue, how shamefully we haue ben seduced vnder the papacy. ffor Christ was not so louyngly set forthe vnto vs, as the dearly beloued prophetes, Apostles, and Christe hym selfe doth: but so fearfully was he described vnto vs, that we haue ben more afrayed of hym, then of Moyses, yee we thought Moyses doctryne muche more lyghter, and to haue much more swetnesse in it, then the doctrine of Christ. And so we knewe nothynge els, but that Christ had ben a wrothfull iudge, whose displeasure we myght haue reconcyled with our good workes and with our holines, & whose pardõ we myght haue optayned through the merytes and intercessions of sayntes. This is not onely a shamefull

lesynge, and a miserable decauyng of poore consciences, but also the hygheste blasphemy of the grace of god, a denyenge of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Chryste. &c. and of all his vnoutspeakeable benefytes, sklaunderynge and condemnynge of his holy gospell, a destroyenge of faythe, and (in steade therof) a settynge vp of vtter abhomynacions, lyes, and errours, &c.

Blyndenesse.

Yf this be not darkenesse, then can not I tell what darkenesse is. Yet coulde no mā in a maner perceaue it, but euery mā toke it for ỳ playne verite, & yet vnto this day wyl our papystes nedes take it for ỳ ryght way, and shed much innocent bloude for ỳ same. Go to then, yf we can kepe and gide our selues, yf we can preserue our selues from errour, yf we can optayne grace and remissiō of synnes, resyst the deuell & all misfortune, ouercome synne and death by our owne merytes: Then must all the scripture be false, which testifyeth of vs, how that of our selues we are but lost, scattred abrode, woūded, weake, and feble shepe. And so shulde we haue no nede of Chryste to be shepherde, to seke vs, to brynge vs together, to gyde vs, to bynde vs vp, to loke vnto vs, & to strēgthe vs agaynste the deuell. And so hath he also geuen his lyfe for vs in vayne: For yf we cā

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bringe al this to passe, & optayne it through our owne strēgth and goodnesse, then haue we no nede of Christes helpe.

But here thou hearest the contrary: namely, that thou art but a lost shepe, & of thy selfe canst not come to the shepherd agayn, but to go astraye onely that canst thou well do. And yf Christ thy shepherd dyd not seke and fetch the agayne, thou must nedes be a praye vnto the wolfe. But nowe he cōmeth, seketh, fyndeth, and bringeth the vnto his folde, that is to saye, into his Christen congregacion, through the worde & sacrament, geueth his lyfe for the, and holdeth the styll by the ryght hande, lest thou shuldest fall in to ony errour. There hearest thou nothyng of thyne owne strēgth, of thyne owne good workes and merytes, except thou wylt call it strength, a good worke and meryte to go astray, to be feble and lost. Christ worketh, deserueth, and sheweth here his power onely. It is he that seketh, beareth and gydeth the. He through his death deserueth lyfe for the. He onely is stronge, and defendeth the lest thou shuldest perysshe and be taken awaye out of his hādes. Joh. x. Vnto all this canst thou do nothynge, saue applye thyne eares to heare, and with thankesgeuynge to receaue suche an vnoutspeakeable treasure,

Marke thys well.

and to learne to knowe well the voyce of thy shepherde, to followe hym, and to eschue the voyce of straungers.

Take hede to thy shepherdes voyce.

Wherfore yf thou wylt be rychely prouyded for, both in body and soule, aboue all thynges take good hede than to the voyce of this shepherde, herken well what he sayeth vnto the, let hym fede the, rule the, gyde the, defēde the, comforte the. &c. That is to saye, kepe the vnto his worde, be glad to heare it and to learne it, & so no doute thou shalt be well prouyded for, both in body and soule.

By thys that hath ben spoken of hether to, I thynke it but easy to vnderstand these wordes: The LORDE is my shepherde. Yee and all the whole Psalme besyde. They are but few wordes: The LORDE is my shepherde, but of a great weyght and pyth. The worlde maketh great boastynge and crakynge of honoure, power, ryches, fauour, of men &c. But the prophete maketh his boast of none of these: for they be all vncertayne and transytory. He speaketh but few wordes and good: The LORDE is my shepherde. Thus speaketh a sure and constant fayth, which turneth hyr back vpon euery thynge that is temporall & transitory, howe hye and precyous so euer it be, and turneth ẏ face and hart strayght vnto

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the LORDE, whiche is onely and altogether and doth it hym selfe alone. Euen he, & els none whether he be kynge or Emperour (sayeth he) is my shepherde. Therfore goeth he forwarde in all quyetnesse and sayeth.

I shall lacke nothynge.

This doth he speake in generall of all the benefytes bodely and goostly, that we receaue by the offyce of preachynge. As though he wolde saye: Yf the LORDE be my shepherde, then doutles I shall lacke nothynge. I shall haue abundasice of meate drynke, clothynge, alpuynge, defence, peace, and all maner of necessaryes what so euer serueth for the sustentacion of this lyfe. ffor I haue a ryche shepherde, whiche shall not suffre me to lacke. Neuertheles he doth speake moost specyally of the spiritual goodes and gyftes that the worde of God bringeth with it, and sayeth: ffor as much as ỳ LORDE hath taken me amonge his flock, & prouydeth for me with his owne pasture. that is: for as much as he hath rychely geuen me his holy worde, he shall not suffre me to haue scarcenesse in ony thynge. He shal geue his blessynge vnto the worde, that it maye haue strength, & brynge forth frute in me. He shall lykewyse geue me his spirite to stande by me, & to comforte me in al tem-

A generall sentence.

tacions and troubles, to make my harte also sure and certayne, and that I doute not therin, but that I am one of my shepherdes deare shepe. And he my faythfull shepherde, which wyll deale gently with me, as with a poore weake shepe, and wyll strengthy my faythe, endue me also with other spirituall gyftes, comforte me in all troubles, heare me whan I call vpon hym, defende me from the wolfe, that is from the deuell, so that he shall not be able to do me harme. And fynally delyuer me from all myssortune. This meaneth he whan he sayeth: I shall lacke nothynge.

An obiectiō Thou wylt saye: Yee but wherby shall I perceaue that the LORDE is my shepherde? I can not perceaue that he dealeth so louyngly with me, as the Psalme speaketh, yee the contrary do I well perceaue. Dauid was an holy prophete, and a man dearly beloued vnto God, therfore coulde he easely talke of the matter, and beleue well as he sayd. As for me, I shall not be able to do it after hym, for I am a poore synner.

An answer I haue declared aboue, that a shepe hath this good cōdicio a proper vertue in it, that it knoweth well the voyce of his shepherde, and ordreth it selfe rather after the eares, then after the eyes. The same vertue doth

doth Christe prayse also in his shepe, whan he sayeth Joh. x. My shepe know my voyce. Now his voyce soundeth after this maner: I am a good shepherde, and geue my lyfe for my shepe. And I geue them euerlastyng lyfe, and they shall neuer perysshe, & no man shall plucke them out of my hande. Take good hede nowe vnto this voyce, and order thy selfe therafter. Yf thou so do, then be sure that thou art one of Christes shepe, & he thy shepeherde, which knoweth the ryght well, and can cal the by name. Now yf thou hast hym for thy shepeherde, then shalt thou verely lacke nothyng, yee thou hast already that thou shuldest haue, euen euerlastynge lyfe. Item thou shalt neuer perysshe, nother shall ther be ony power so greate & myghtye, as to be able to pluck ỹ out of his hand. Onely be thou sure of this. For doutles this shepherdes voyce shall neuer fayle the. What wylt thou more?

But yf thou letteste this voyce go, and orderest thy selfe after the syght of the eyes, and after the felynge of that olde Adam, thē leseste thou the fayth and confidence, whiche thou as a shepe shuldest haue vnto hym as to thy shepeherde. And so falleth ther vpon the now one ymaginacion, now another, so that thou canst not be in quyete, but disputest

Leaue not the voyce of thy shepherde.

test by thy selfe and sayest: Yf the LORDE be my shepherde, why suffreth he then the worlde to plage me and persecute me so myserably, contrarye to all my deseruynge? I syt amonge wolues, and am not sure of myfe the twinkelynge of an eye, but ye se no shepherde that wyll defende me. Item, why geueth he the deuell licēce to do me so much harme, with feare and despayre? Besydes this, I fynde my selfe all vnapte, feble, vnpacient, and laden yet with many synnes: I fynde no certaynte, but doutfulnesse, no consolacion, but fearfulnesse and quakynge for the wrath of God. Whan begynneth he to declare in me, that he is my shepherde?

whatgood followeth whan one cleueth fast to gods worde.

Suche and many other mo wonder ful cogitacions shalt thou haue, yf thou let his voyce and worde passe. But yf thou cleue stylll fast vnto it, then suffrest thou nother the deceatfulnesse of the deuell, the displeasure & madnesse of the worlde, nother thyn owne infyrmite and vnworthynesse to ouercome the by temptacion: but goest on boldly, and sayest: Whether the deuell, ỹ worlde, or myne owne conscience do take parte agaynste me neuer so fearsly, yet wyll not I therfore take ouermuch thought. It muste and shalbe thus, that who so euer is a shepe of the LORDE, he can not remayne vntempted

tempted. Let it go with me as it maye, yet whether they ſeeth me, or roſt me, yet is this my comforte, that my ſhepherde hath geuen his lyfe for me. Beſydes this, he hath alſo a ſwete and louynge voyce, wherwith he comforteth and ſayeth: I ſhall neuer peryſh nother ſhall ther ony mā pucke me out of his hande, but I ſhall haue euerlaſtynge lyfe. This promyſe wyl he faythfully kepe with me, what ſo euer become vpon me. And thoughe ſomtyme ther chaunce a ſynne or other impediment by the reaſon of myne infyrmite, yet wyll he not therfore caſt me awaye, for he is a louynge ſhepherde, whiche loketh to the weake ſhepe, byndeth vp theyr woundes, and healeth them. And to the intent that I ſhulde be the ſurer of this, & not to doute theron, he hathe lefte me here the holy Sacrament for a token that it is ſo in dede.

Euen thus hath the prophete done. He was not mery alwaye, nother coulde he at al haures ſinge: The lord is my ſhepherd, I ſhall lack nothyng. He hath ben sōtyme at many a great exigēt, yee al to many: ſo ỳ he nother felt ỳ ryghteouſneſſe, cōforte, nor helpe of god, but playne ſynne, the wrath of God, fearfulneſſe, diſpayre, the paynes of hell &c. as he complayneth hymſelfe in ma-

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ny Psalmes. Neuertheleſſe he turneth hym from his owne felynge, and taketh holde of God by his promiſe concernynge Meſſias that then was for to come, and caſteth this in his mynde: Howe ſo euer it ſtande with me, yet is thys the cõforte of my hart, that I haue a gracyous & mercyfull LORDE, whiche is my ſhepeherde, whoſe worde and promyſe doth ſtrength and cõforte me, therfore ſhall I lacke nothynge. And euen therfore hathe he wrytten thys and other Psalmes, to the intent that we ſhulde be ſure, that in very temptacyons there is elswhere no counſel nor comforte to be found. And that this is the onely golden ſcience, namely, to cleue vnto the worde and promyſe of God, and to iudge after the ſame, and not after the felynge of the harte. And ſo (no doute) ther ſhall followe helpe & comforte, and not fayle in ony thynge.

¶ Now followeth the ſeconde verſe.

He fedeth me in a grene paſture, and leadeth me to the freſh vvater.

In the fyrſte verſe hathe the Prophete ſhortly comprehended the meanynge of the whol pſalme, namely that who ſo euer hath the LORDE for his ſhepherd, ſhall lack nothynge. More than this doth not he teache

in thys Pſalme, but onely ſetteth forth the ſame more at larg with goodly ornate wordes and ſimilytudes how it chaunceth that they which are ỹ lordes ſhepe, lack nothyng, and ſayeth: He fedeth me. &c. But almooſt thorow out the whole Pſalme (as his maner is oft tymes to do) he vſeth wordes, whiche ſignifye ſomwhat elſ than they ſounde. As whan he maketh mencion of the ſhepherde, of the fedyng, of ỹ grene paſture, of the freſh water, the ſtaf, the ſhepe hooke &c. it is eaſy to perceaue that he wyll haue ſomwhat elſ vnderſtonde therby, then we men vſe to ſpeake therof. Suche maner of ſpeakynge is very cõmune in the ſcripture, and therfore ſhulde men take diligent hede thervnto, that they maye be accoſtumed wythall, and learne to vnderſtonde it.

But ſe howe well fauouredlye he can ſpeake. I am (ſayeth he) a ſhepe of the lordes, whiche fedeth me in a grene paſture. &c. A naturall ſhepe can not be better, thẽ whã the ſhepherde fedeth it in a pleaſaunt grene paſture, and beſyde freſſhe water. Yf it can haue thys, it thynketh no man vpon earth is more ryche or happyer then it. For there it fyndeth euery thynge that it can deſyre. A goodly thyck plentyfull graſſe, wherof it waxeth ſtronge and fat: A freſſhe water,

wyere

wher wyth it can refreſſhe, and quycken it ſelfe. There hath it pleaſure and ioye: Euen ſo wyl Dauid ſaye here lyke wyſe, that God neuer ſhewed hym a greater grace and benefyte vpon earth, then thys, that he myght be in the place and among the people, where the worde and dwellynge of God, and the ryght Gods ſeruyce was. For where that treaſure is, there goeth it well both in the ſpirytuall and worldlye regiment. As yf he wolde ſaye: All the nacions and kyngdomes vpon earth are nothynge. They are (in dede) rycher, myghtyer, and more glorious then we Jewes, and make great boaſtynge therof. They boaſt alſo of theyr wyſdome and holyneſſe, for they haue goddes alſo whome they ſerue: yet wyth all theyr pompe and glory, they are but euen a playn wylderneſſe and deſert. For there is nother ſhepherde nor paſture, therfore muſte the ſhepe nedes ſtraye, be fampyſhed & peryſh: As for vs, though we haue many wylderneſſes aboute vs, yet ſyt we here at reſt, ſafe, and mery in paradyſe, and in a pleaſaunt grene paſture, where there is plentye of graſſe and freſſhe water, and haue wyth vs oure ſhepherde, whiche fedeth vs, leadeth vs to the drynke, defendeth vs &c. Therfore can we lacke nothynge.

Thys

Thys man had gooſtly eyes, and therfore ſawe he ryghtwell, what is the beſt and nobleſt good vpon earth. He maketh no boaſt of his kynglye worſhyppe and power, he knowlegeth wel that ſuch goodes are alſo the gyftes of God: nother runneth he frō thē & letteth thē lye: but vſeth them vnto the honoure of god, and geueth hym thankes therfore. But of this maketh he ſpecialiye hys boaſt, namelye, that the LORDE is hys ſhepherde, and he in hys paſture and fedynge: That is, that he hath Gods worde. This benefyte can he neuer forgette, but ſpeaketh therof maruaylous excellentlye, and with greate toye, and prayſeth it farre aboue all the goodes vpon earth. And thys he doth in many Pſalmes, as in the .cxviii. where he ſayeth. The lawe of thy mouth is dearer vnto me then thouſandes of golde & ſyluer. Item I loue thy commanndementes aboue golde and precious ſtone. O howe ſwete are thy wordes vnto my throte? Yee more then hony vnto my mouthe.

The cheſt good vpō earthe is to haue gods word

Thys ſcience ſhulde we learne alſo, namelye, to let the worlde boaſt of theyr great ryches, honoure, power, &c. For it is lowſe, vncertayne and tranſytory ware, whiche God caſteth into the doūgeon. It is a ſmall matter for hym to geue an vngracious per-

What we ought here to learne.

sone (that blasphemeth and dyshonoureth hym agayne for hys reward) a kyngdome, a dukedome, or ony other worshyppe, and good vpon earth. These worldlye goodes are hys draff and swillynges, wherwyth he fylleth the hogges bellyes, that he is disposed to kyll. But vnto hys chyldren (as Dauid speaketh here therof) he geueth the ryght treasure. Therfore shulde we as the deare chyldren and heyres of God, nother boaste oure selues of oure wysdome, strength nor ryches: but of thys, that we haue the precious pearle: euen ỳ worthy worde, where by we knowe God oure louynge father and Jesus Christ whome he hath sent. Thys is oure treasure & inheritaunce, whiche is sure and euerlastynge, and better then al ỳ good of the worlde. Who so hath thys, let hym suffre other men to gather mony together, to lyue voluptuously, to be proude, and hye mynded. But though he hymselfe be despysed and poore in the sighte of the worlde, yet let not that tempte hym, but let hym thanke God for hys vnoutspeakeable gyfte, & pray that he maye abyde thereby. It maketh no matter how rych & glorious we be here vpō earth. Yf we kepe thys treasure, we haue plentye of ryches & honoure. Saynt Paule was a man of lytle reputacion, and poore

The word of God is oure treasure.

vpon

vpõ earth, hauynge the deuell & the worlde very fearce agaynst hym: But in the syghte of God he was a man ryght deare & greatly set by. Besydes this he was so poore, that he was fayne to get his liuyng wyth the labour of hys handes. And yet for all ỹ greate pouertye, he was rycher then the emperour of Rome: hauynge neuertheless none other ryches, but the knowlege of Christe. For the which (sayeth he Phil. 3.) I counte all thynges (nothynge vpon earthe excepte,) very losse and dounge.

The God of mercye graunt vs grace, ỹ we also after ỹ ensample of Dauid, Paul & other holy men, maye coũte oure treasure (which is euẽ the same ỹ they had) as greate & magnifie it aboue al ỹ goodes vpõ earth. and hartelye to geue God thankes therfore that he hath weteſafed it vpon vs, afore many thousandes of other. He myght haue suffred vs to go astraye as well as ỹ Turkes, Egyptcians, Jewes, and other ydolatrers, which know not of that treasure. Or els he myghte haue suffred vs styll to be harde harted, as are the Papystes, that blaspheme and condemne thys treasure of oures. Where as he hath set vs now in hys owne grene medowe, and prouyded vs so rychely with good pasture and freſshe wa-

God hath done more for vs, thẽ for many other.

ter. It commeth euen of hys grace, therfore haue we the more to thanke hym for.

The medowe.

As for the people of God or the holye congregacion of Christ, the prophet calleth it a grene medowe. For it is Gods pleasaunt garden, garnysshed and bewtyfyed w all maner of spirituall gyftes. The pasture or grasse therin, is the worde of God, whereby the consciences are strengthed and refresshed. In the same grene medowe doth oure LORDE God gather hys shepe together, fedeth them therin with good grasse, and refressheth them with fresshe water.

The grasse

That is, he committeth vnto the holy Christen church the shepherdes office, deliuereth and geueth her the holy gospel, and the Sacramentes, to take charge and loke to hys shepe therewith, that they maye be rychely prouyded for, wyth doctrine, with comfort, wyth strength, and with defence agaynst al euell, &c. As for those that preach the lawe of Moses or the commaundementes of mē they fede not the shepe in a grene pasture, but in the wyldernesse (where they famysh) and leade them to foule stynkynge waters, wherof they perysh and dye.

What they be that fede shepe in the wyldernesse.

By this allegorye of the grene pasture, wyll the the prophete declare the great abundaunce and ryches of the holy gospell and

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of the knowlege of Chryſt amõge the fayth full. ffor lyke as the graſſe in a grene medowe ſtandeth goodly thycke and full, and euer groweth moze and moze: Eue ſo haue the faythfull not onely Gods wozde wyth all plẽteouſneſſe, but alſo the moze they vſe it, and medle withall, the moze it increaſeth and groweth amonge them. Therfoze ſetteth he the wozdes maruaylous playnly. The great ryches of ſuche as beleue.

He ſayeth not: he bryngeth me once oz ofte into a grene paſture, but fedeth me ſtyl ther in, that I maye lye, take my reſt, and dwell euen in the myddes of the graſſe, and nede neuer to ſuffre hunger oz ony ſcarceneſſe beſyde. ffor the wozde that he here vſeth, maye be called lyenge oz reſtynge, as a beaſt lyeth and reſteth vpon his foure fete. After the ſame maner doth Salomon ſpeake alſo in the. lxxi. Pſalme, where he pzophecyeth of the kyngdome of Chryſte and the goſpell, ỹ it ſhulde myghtely go thozowe and come in to all places, and ſayeth: Ther ſhall be an heape of cozne in the earth hye vpon ỹ hylles. ꝛc. & ſhalbe grene in the citye lyke graſſe vpon the earth. That Dauid alſo in thys Pſalme ſpeaketh lykewyſe of the goſpell, he declareth hymſelfe afterwarde, wher he ſayeth: He quyckeneth my ſoule. Itẽ Thy ſtaffe & thy ſhepehooke do cõforte me.

The fyrst frute of Gods worde.

This is now the fyrst frute of ẏ worde of God, that the christē are so instructe ther by, that they increace in faith & hope, learne to cōmytte all theyr doynges vnto God, & what so euer they haue nede of, eyther in soule or body, to loke for it at his hande, &c.

The secōd frute of Gods worde.

And leadeth me to the fresshe water.

This is the second frute of gods worde It is vnto the faythfull not onely pasture and grasse, wherby they are fylled & strengthed in faythe. But it is also vnto them a goodly colde fresshe water, where by they take refresshynge and comforte. Therfore leaueth he not there where he sayde: He fedeth me in a grene pasture, but addeth this also vnto it: And leadeth me to the fresh water. As yf he wolde saye: In the greate heate whan the Sōne doth sore burne. Psal. c. xx. and I can haue no shadowe, then leadeth he me to the freshe water, geueth me drynke, and refressheth me, that is: in all maner of troubles, anguishes, and necessities, goostly and bodely, whan I knowe not els where to fynde helpe or comforte, I holde me vnto the worde of grace. There onely and no where els do I fynde the ryght cōsolacion & refreshynge, & that plenteously. Now wher as he speaketh here of this comforte w̄ garnysshed wordes, he calketh of it in another

place

place with playne and manyfeſt wordes, & ſayeth: Yf thy worde were not my comfort and delyte, I ſhulde peryſſhe in my trouble. I wyll neuer forget thy worde, for in my trouble it is my conſolacion, yee thy worde quyckeneth me. Pſal. 118.

Neuertheleſſe he continueth ſtyll in the ſimilitude of the ſhepherde and of the ſhepe. And (no doute) it is cõmun in al the prophetes. ffor of the ſhepe and other cattell had ỹ Jewes theyr beſt lyuynge, and were cõmunly ſhepeherdes, as was Dauid and the Patriarkes. Therfore is this ſimilitude oftymes ſpoken of in the ſcripture. But Dauid ſpeaketh of this matter after the nature of the contry. ffor the lande of promyſe is an whote drye ſandye, & ſtony lãde, which hath many wyldernesses & lytle water. Therfore in the fyrſt boke of Moſes it was more thẽ once declared, how that ỹ heythen ſhepherdes ſtroue wt the ſhepeherdes of the Patriarkes becauſe of water. ffor ỹ whiche cauſe in the ſame contry they toke it for a ſpeciall treaſur, yf they myght haue water for theyr cattell (In our contryes we knowe not therof, for ther is water ynoughe euery where.) Of this dyd Dauid ſe, and he rehearſeth it for a ſpeciall benefyte, to be vnder the cuſtodye of the LORDE, whyche ſhulde

Why the ſcripture rehearſeth ſo oft this ſimilitude.

not onely fede hym in a grene pasture, but also in the heate, bryngynge hym to ỹ fresh water, &c.

Shortly, his meanynge is to declare, ỹ as lytle as a mā can come to the knowlege of God and the truthe & to the ryght fayth without the worde of God: So lytle can ther ony comforte and peace of conscience be founde without the same. The worldly haue also theyr comforte and ioye, howe be it ỹ endureth but the twinkelynge of an eye. Whan trouble and anguysh commeth (and specyally the last houre) it goeth awaye. As Salomon sayeth: After laughter, commeth sorowe: and after ioye, commeth heuynesse. But as for them that drynke of this fresshe and lyuynge water, they maye well suffre trouble & disease in the worlde, but they shal neuer lacke the true consolacion. And specyally whan it commeth to the poynt, the leafe turneth ouer with them, whiche is as much to saye, as: After shorte weppynge cōmeth euerlastynge laughter: and after a lytle sorow, commeth excellent ioye. ii. Cor. iiii. For they shall not wepe & mourne both here and there, but as Chryste sayeth: Blessed are you that wepe here, for ye shall laugh. Luce. vi.

Without gods word cā no mās conscience be at rest.

Pro. 14.

He quyckeneth my soule and bryn-

geth

geth me forthe in the vvaye of rygh-
teouſneſſe for his names ſake.

Here doth the prophet declare hymſelfe of what maner of paſture and freſh water he ſpake: namely, euen of the ſame ꝑ ſtrengtheth and quyckeneth the ſoule. This can be nothynge els but Gods worde. But for as muche as our LORDE God hath two maner of wordes, the lawe, and the goſpell, the prophete whan he ſayeth: He quyckeneth my ſoule geueth ſuffycienlty to vnderſtonde that he ſpeaketh not here of the lawe, but of the goſpell. The lawe can not quycken the ſoule, for it is a worde that requyreth and commaundeth vs to loue God wyth all our hartes, &c. and our neyghbour as our ſelues. Who ſo doth not this, hym it condempneth, and ſpeaketh this ſentence ouer hym: Curſed be euery man which doth not all that is written in the boke of ꝑ law. Deut. 27. Galat. 3. Now is it certayne that no man vpon earth doth this: therfore commeth the lawe with his iudgement, fearyng and veryng the conſciences. And yf ther be no helpe, it goeth thorow, ſo that they muſt nedes fall into diſpayre, and be cõdempned for euer. Of this occaſion doth S. Paule ſaye: By the lawe cõmeth but the knowlege of ſynne. Item, the lawe cauſeth but wrath.

Spiritual paſture & water.

The lawe

Rmo. 3.

Rmo. 4.

As for the gospell, it is a blessed worde.

The gospell. It requyreth none suche of vs, but bryngeth vs tydynges of all good, namely, that God hath geuen vs poore synners his onely sõne to be our shepherde, to seke agayne vs famished and dispersed shepe, and to geue his lyfe for vs, that he myght so delyuer vs from synne, from euerlastynge death, and from the power of ẏ deuel. This is ẏ grene grasse and the fresh water, where wt the LORDE quyckeneth oure soules. And thus are we made lowse from euell cõsciences and heuy thoughtes. Of this shal we speake more in the .xiii. verse. He bryngeth me forth in the waye of ryghteousnesse.

Here (sayeth he) doth not the LORDE my faythfull shepherde leaue, ẏ he fedeth me in a grene medowe, & leadeth me to the fresh water, & so quickeneth my soule, but he bryngeth me forth also in the right waye, that I departe not asyde, go astraye, & so perysshe. That is, he holdeth me fast to the pure doctrine, that I be not deceaued by false spyrytes, and that I fall not awaye by ony other temptacion or offence. Item, that I maye know, how I ought to leade myn outward conuersacion & lyfe, & that I suffre not myselfe to be perswaded by the holynes and straynge lyfe of ypocrites. Item, what is the

To be led in ẏ ryght way what it is.

true

true doctrine, fayth and ſeruice of God, &c.

This is now agayne a goodly frute & vertue of ỹ woꝛde of God, that they whiche cleue faſt there vnto, do not onely receaue ſtrength & cõfoꝛte of ỹ ſoule therby, but are pꝛeſerued alſo from vntrue doctrine & falſe holyneſſe. Many mẽ optayne this treaſure, but they can not kepe it. ffoꝛ as ſoone as a man is to bolde & pꝛeſumptuous, and thynketh hymſelfe ſure of ỹ matter, it is done wꝯ hym. Oꝛ euer he can loke aboute hym, he is deceaued. ffoꝛ the deuell alſo can pꝛetende holyneſſe, and tranſfoꝛme hymſelfe into an angell of lyght, as ſaynt Paul ſayeth: And euen ſo lykewyſe can his minyſters ſhewe thẽſelues, as though they were ỹ pꝛeachers of ryghteouſneſſe, & come ī ſhepes clothyng amonge the flocke of Chꝛyſt, but inwardly are they rauenynge wolues. Therfoꝛe is it good here to watch & pꝛaye (as the pꝛophete doth in ỹ laſt verſe) that our ſhepherd maye kepe vs by this treaſure whiche he hath geuen vs. They ỹ do not this, certaynly they ſhall leſe it. And the ende of that man (as Chꝛiſt ſayeth) ſhall be woꝛſe then the begynnynge. ffoꝛ they ſhall afterwarde become ỹ mooſt poyſened enemyes of Chꝛiſtes flock, and do moꝛe harme wꝯ theyꝛ falſe doctryne, then the tyꝛauntes with the ſwearde. This had

An excellent vertue of Gods woꝛde.

Luce.11.

had ſaynt Paul well proued by the falſe Apoſtles, that made the Corinthians & Galathians to erre ſo ſoone, and afterwarde made diuiſion in all Aſia. We ſe it our ſelues alſo this daye by the Anabaptiſtes and other falſe ſpretes. For his names ſake.

The name of God.

The name of God is the preachyng of God, wherby he is magnifyed and knowen to be gracyous, mercyfull, longe ſufferyng, true, faythfull, &c. which (not withſtãdynge that we be the chyldren of wrath, and gylty of euerlaſtynge death) forgeueth vs all our ſynnes, and taketh vs for his owne chyldrẽ and inheritours. This is his name, thys doth he cauſe to be proclamed by his worde. Thus wyll he be knowen, magnifyed, and honoured. And (accordynge vnto the fyrſte commaundement) he wyl euen thus declare hym ſelfe towarde vs, as he hath cauſed it to be preached of hym. Lyke as he doth ſtyll, ſtrengtheth and quyckeneth our ſoules ſpiritually, and kepeth vs that we fall not in to errour, getteth vs lyuynge for our body, and preſerueth vs from all miſfortune.

This honoure ỹ he ſo is as we haue now ſayd, is geuen hym onely of them that cleue faſt vnto his worde, theſe beleue & confeſſe playnly, that all the gyftes & goodes whiche they haue gooſtly and bodely, they receaue them

them of God, euen of his mere grace & good neſſe. That is to ſaye: For his names ſake, not for theyr owne workes and deſeruynges. ffor this do they geue thankes vnto hym, and declare the ſame vnto other. This honour can not be geuen vnto God, of ony preſumptuous iuſticiaryes, as heretikes & falſe ſpretes, or enemyes and blaſphemers of Gods worde, for they magnifye not his name, but theyr owne.

And though I walke in the valley of the ſhadowe of death, yet fear I no euell, for thou art with me. Thy ſtaffe and thy ſhephooke do comforte me.

Hetherto hath the prophete declared, that they whiche haue & loue ỳ worde of God, cã lacke nothynge. ffor the LORDE is theyr ſhepherde, which doth not only fede thẽ in a grene paſture, & leadeth thẽ to the freſhe water, ỳ they may be fat, ſtronge, and refreſhed both bodely & gooſtly: but alſo taketh ſuche care for thẽ, ỳ they be not weery of the good paſture & freſh water, leauyng ỳ grene medowe, & departe agayne from the ryght way into the wylderneſſe. This is ỳ fyrſt parte of this Pſalme. Nowe teacheth he farther how that they whiche are the ſhepe of thys ſhepeherde, be compaſſed aboute with many ieopardyes and miſfortunes. Neuerthe- What the prophet

leſſe

teacheth in this verse

lesse that LORDE (sayeth he) not onely defendeth the, but delyuered them also out of al tẽptacions & troubles. For he is amonge the. Nowe after what maner he is w̃ them, he declareth lykewyse well fauouredly.

Here thou seyst ẏ as soone as ẏ worde of God goeth forth, and as soone as ther be ony ẏ receaue it, & abide by it, immediatly ẏ deuell & all his angels steppe forth & moue the worlde w̃ all ẏ power therof agaynst it, to put it downe, & vtterly to destroye them ẏ haue it & knowlege it. For loke what our LORD god speaketh or doth, it must be tried & go thorow ẏ fyre. This is very nedfull for christen men to knowe, els myght they fayle & thynke thus in theyr myndes: How standeth this together: The prophet sayeth afore: The LORDE is my shepherd, I shall lacke nothynge. And here he sayeth cõtrary, namely, that he muste walke in the darke valley. And in the nexte verse followynge he confesseth that he hath enemyes: Where by he geueth sufficiently to vnderstand that he lacketh many, yee all thynges. For he that hath enemyes and lyeth in a darke valley, seyth no lyghte, that is to saye, he hath nother comforte nor hope, but is forsaken of euery man, and euery thynge is blacke & darke before his eyes, yee eue̅ the fayre clear sonne.

Perlecucion.

Sõne. How is this true then that he ſhulde lacke nothynge?

Here muſt thou not ordre thy ſelfe after thyne owne eyes, & followe natural reaſon, as doth the worlde, vnto whome it is vnpoſſyble to ſe this ryche and glorious comforte of Chriſten men, that they ſhulde lacke nothynge. Yee certaynly they holde that the contrary is true, namely, that ther are no people vpon earth more poore, more myſerable, and more vnhappy then chriſten men: Yee with all theyr diligence & corage helpe they therto, that they maye be mooſt abhominably perſecuted, bãnyſhed, ſhamed, and put to death. And in ſo doynge, they thynke they do God ſeruyce therin. It appeareth therfore outwardly as though chriſten men were but ſhepe dryuen awaye and forſaken of God, and geuen ouer already into the wolues mouthes, and to be euen ſuch, as lacke nothynge but altogether.

We maye not ordre our ſelues after ỹ our warde ſyght.

Agayne, they that ſerue that greate God Mammon or the belly, appeare in the worlde, to be thoſe good ſhepe whiche (as the Pſalme ſayeth) lacke nothynge: beynge rychely prouyded for of God, cõforted and preſerued from all parell and myſſortune. ffor they haue theyr owne hartes deſyre, honoure, good, ioye, pleaſure, euery mans fauoure.

The ſeruaũtes of Mãmon.

noure, &c. Nother nede they be afrayed to be persecuted or put to death for ỳ faythes sake. For as longe as they put not theyr trust in Chryst the onely true shepherd, nor knowlege hym, whether they beleue on the deuell or his dãme, or do what so euer they wyll besyde with couetousnesse. &c. they are taken not onely for well doers therin, but also for the lyuyng sayntes, which byde styll by the olde fayth, and wyll not be deceaued thorowe heresye, whiche is (as Dauid teacheth here) that the LORDE onely is the shepeherde. So abhominable and greueous mortall synne is it to beleue on this shepeherde and to knowlege hym, that ther cam neuer suche a synne vpon earth. For euen the Popes holynes which els can dispense with all synnes and forgeue them, can not rempytte this onely cryme.

The pope wyll not forgeue hym, that putteth his whole trust in Chryst.

Therfore (I saye) in this thynge do not thou followe the worlde & thyne owne reason, whiche whyle they iudge after the outwarde appearaunce, become foolysshe, & holde the prophete but for a lyar in that he sayeth: I shall lacke nothynge. But (as I sayde afore) holde thou the faste vnto the worde and promyses of God, herken vnto thy shepherde, how and what he sayeth vnto the, and ordre thy selfe accordynge vnto hys

voyce,

woyce, not accozdynge to that which the eye seyth oz ỹ harte feleth. And so haste thou the victozy. Thus doth the prophete: he confesseth that he walketh in the valley of the shadowe of death. That is, that he is cõpassed aboute with trouble, heynesse, anguyssh, necessite, &c. as thou mayst se moze at large in hys stozyes, and other Psalmes. Item, that he hath nede of comfozte, wherby it is sufficiẽtly declared that he is in heynesse. Item, that he hathe enemyes. And yet he sayeth: Though my tentacions were mo and greate, and though I were in a wozse case: Yee though I were in deathes mouth alreadye, yet do not I feare onye myssoztune. Not that I am able to helpe my selfe thozowe myne owne pzouysion, trauayle, laboure oz succurre. Nother do I trust to myne owne wysdome, vertue, kynglye power, and ryches: ffoz in thys matter, the helpe, counsel, comfozte, and power of all men is farre to lytle.

Howe the Pzophet behaueth hymself in tentacion & trouble.

But thys is it that doth it, euen that the LORDE is wyth me. As yf he wolde say: Certaynly of myne owne behalfe I am feble, in heynesse, vexed, and compassed aboute wyth al maner of parell and missoztune. My harte also and conscience is not quyete, because of my synnes. I fele an hoz-

rible fearfulnesse of death, and hel, so that I myght in a maner dispayre. But though al the worlde, yee and the gates of hell be set agaynst me, yet wyll I therfore not be discoraged. Yee I wyll not be afrayed for all the myssortune and payne that they are able to saye vpon me. ffor the LORDE is wyth me. The LORDE (I saye) whiche made heauen and earthe and all that therin is, vnto whom al creatures, angels, deuels, men, synne, death, &c. are subiecte. Summa, he that hath all thynges in hys owne power is my counseigeuer, my comforter, my defender, and helper: Therfore am I afrayed of no myssortune.

Asaph

After thys maner doth Asaph speake also in the. lxxii. Psalme, where he comforteth the Christen agaynst that greate stombling block, that the vngodlye haue such prosperyte vpon earth: And that the beloued sayntes of God on the other syde are euer plaged, &c. and sayeth: Yf I haue but the o LORDE, I passe not vpon heauen nor earth. Though both body and soule shulde perysshe. Yet thou o God, arte the cõforte of my harte and my porcion. Now after what maner the LORDE is with hym, he sheweth farther more, and sayeth,

Thy staf and thy shepehooke do com

forte

forte me.

The LORDE (sayeth he) is wyth me, but not bodely, that I may se or heare hym. Thys presence of the LORDE wherof I speake, is not comprehended wyth the fyue wyttes. Onely fayth seyth it. The same is sure, that the LORDE is nyer vnto vs, then we are to oure selues. Wherby? euen by the worde. Therfore sayeth he: Thy staf and thy shepehooke comforte me: As yf he wolde saye: In al my troubles and necessityes I fynde nothynge vpon earth, whereby I maye be helped to be at rest. Onely the worde of God is my staf & shepehooke where by I holde me, and stonde vp agayne. And sure I am lykewyse by it, that thy LORDE is with me, and doth not onely strengthe and cõforte me by the same worde in all troubles and tentactions: but also delyuereth me from all myne enemyes, spyte of the deuell, and the worlde. Wyth these wordes: Thy staf and thy shepehooke do cõforte me. cõmeth he agayne vnto ỹ similitude of ỹ shepherde & the shepe, & wyll say thus much: Lyke as a bodely shepherde ruleth his shepe with the staf or shepehooke, & leadeth them to ỹ pasture & to fresh water, where they fynd meate and drynke, and defendeth them wyth the shepehooke a-

How the LORD is ꝑsent & many faithful men.

The similitude of ỹ shepherd

gaynst all parell: Euen so doth the LORD the true shepeherde, gyde and rule me with hys staf. That is to saye, with hys worde: to the intēt that in hys syght I shuld walke wyth a good belefe and a mery conscience, and knowe to beware of vntrue doctryne and false holynesse. Besyde thys, he defendeth me also agaynst al ieopardy and myssortune, bodely and goostly, and deliuereth me from all myne enemyes wt his staf, that is to saye, wyth the same worde doth he strengthe and comforte me so rychelye, that ther is no myssortune so greate, whether it be bodelye or goostlye, but I am able to come out of it, and to ouercome it.

this goeth spiritually to worke.

By thys thou seyste that the prophete speaketh here of no helpe, defence, or comforte of man. Nother draweth he out ony swearde. &c. It goeth here all secretely and preuelye to worke, euen by the worde. So that no man can spye thys defence & comforte, but onely they that beleue. And here doth Dauid wryte a generall rule for all Christen men, whiche is well to be noted: Namelye, that ther is none other meane waye vpon earth for onye man to be delyuered out of all tentations, saue onely to cast all hys burthen vpon God, and to hold hym faste by hys worde of grace, to cleue

sure-

sure eye vnto it, and in no wyse to suffre it to be taken frō hym. Who so doth thys, can be content, whether he be in prosperite or aduersyte, whether he lyue or dye. And fynally he can endure, and must nedes prosper agaynst all deuels, the worlde, and mysfortune. Thys me thynke is a greate prayse of the good worde of God, and a greater power is ascrybed here vnto it, then is the power of all angels & men. Thus doth S. Paule prayse it also Rom. i. The Gospell (sayeth he) is the power of God, for the salnacion of all them that beleue thereon.

The office of preahige

And with thys doth the prophet touche the office of preachynge, for by the mouthly preachynge of the worde whiche goeth in at the eares, and that the harte taketh holde vpon thy fayth, and by ỹ holy sacramentes doth oure LORDE God bryng all thys to passe in his Christen congregacīō, namely, to the intent that the people maye haue fayth, be strenthed in belefe, and preserued in the true doctryne. Item, that they maye fynally endure agaynst all temptacions of the deuell and the worlde. For sence the begynnynge of the worlde hathe God dealte thus with all his sayntes by his worde, and beside the same hath he geuē thē outwarde tokens of grace. This I saye because that no man shuld take vpō hym without these

meanes to medle with God, or to chose hym selfe a peculyar waye vnto heauen, els shall he fall and breake his necke, as the pope and his hath done. And as the Anabaptistes & other seditious spretes do yet this daye.

And with these wordes: Thy staffe and thy shepehooke do comfort me wyll the prophete shewe some spetiall thynge. As yf he wolde say: Moses is a shepherde lykwyse, and hath also a staffe & a shephooke: neuertheless he doth nothynge els but cõpell and punysshe his shepe, and ouerladeth thẽ with an intollerable burthen, Act. xv. Esay. ix. Therfore is he a fearfull & a terrible shepeherde, of whõ the shepe are afrayed, and flye from hym. Neuertheless ỹ LORDE with thy staffe and shephooke, compellest not thy shepe, nother makest them afrayd, nor ouerchargest them, but geuest them comforte.

Therfore speaketh he here of the office of preachynge the newe Testament, whereby tydynge is brought vnto the worlde, that Christ came vpon earthe to saue synners: and therby hath optayned them suche a saluacion, that he hath geuen hys lyfe for them. All they that beleue thys shall not perysshe: but haue euerlastynge lyfe. Joh. iii.

The staf & ỹ shephoke

Thys is the staf and shephooke, wherby the soules take refreshynge, comforte, and ioye.

Wher-

Wherfore in the ſpirytuall ſhepefolde, that is to ſaye, in the kyngdome of Chriſte, ther ought none other lawe to be preached, but the Goſpell, which the prophet with ornate wordes calleth the ſtaf and ſhephooke of cõforte, wherebi they be ſtrengthed in fayth, refreſſhed in theyr hartes, and receaue conſolacion in all maner of troubles, and euen at the poynt of death.

what they be that lede Chriſtes ſhepe in a grene medowe

They that ſo preach, vſe the ſpirytuall shepherdes offyce aryght, fede the shepe of Chriſt in a grene medowe, leade them to the freſh water, refreſh theyr ſoules, kepe them that they be not deceaued, & comforte them with the ſtaf and ſhephooke of Chriſt, &c. And where thou heareſt ſuche one, be ſure thou heareſt Chriſt hymſelfe. Suche men alſo oughte to be taken for true ſhepherdes: that is to ſaye, for the mynyſters of Chriſt, and the ſtewardes of God. Nother oughte it to be regarded, that the worlde cryeth out vpon them, and calleth them heretikes and deceauers. Agayne, they ỹ teach ony thynge els contrarye to the Goſpell, cauſynge men to truſt to theyr owne workes, merites, & to theyr owne fayned holineſſe, theſe no doute, though they boaſt tẽ neuer ſo muche to be the ſucceſſours of the Apoſtles, & decke themſelues with the name and tytle of the Chri-

stenchurch, yee though they rayſed vp dead men, yet are they wolues and murtherers: whiche spare not the flocke of Christ, scatter them abrode, torment them, and kyll thē not onely spiritually, but bodely also, as mē maye se now before theyr eyes.

The names that the worde of God hath in this psalme.

Lyke as the prophete here afore doth call Gods worde or the gospell, grasse, water, the ryght waye, a staffe, & a shephooke: Euen so afterwarde in the fyfth verse he calleth it, a table prepared, an oyntment, & a full cuppe. And thys similitude of the table, oyntmēt, and cuppe doth he take out of the olde testament from the Gods seruyce of the Jewes, and sayeth euen in a maner the same that he had sayd afore, namely, ỳ they whiche haue the worde of God, are ryche ly prouyded for in all poyntes, both concernynge the soule, and body, saue onely ỳ he speaketh it here wyth other fygures and allegoryes. Fyrst bryngeth he in the similitude of the table, where vpon the shewebreads laye contynually. Exod. xxv. xl. And then declareth he what the same dyd sygnifyeth, and sayeth:

A table.

Thou prepareſt a table before me agaynſt myne enemyes, thou anoynteſt myne heade wyth oyle, and fylleſt my cuppe full.

Here

Here doth he knowlege playnly, that he hath enemyes. But he sayeth he kepeth hym from them, and dryueth them backe, by this meanes, namely, because the LORDE hath prepared a table before hym agaynst those his enemyes. Is not this a wonderfull defender? I wolde haue thought he shulde haue prepared before hym a stronge wall, a myghtye bulwarke, depe dyches, armour, and other harnesse & weapens, where by he myght be sure from his enemyes, and discomfite them. And now cõmeth he and prepareth before hym a table, to eate and drynke on, and so to smyte hys enemyes. There coulde I be content to fyght also, yf the enemyes myghte be ouercome without ony ieopardye, care, trauayle and labour. And I to do nothynge els but to syt at a table, to eate and drynke and be mery.

With these wordes: Thou prepareste a table before me agaynst myne enemyes, The great power of Gods worde. wil ỳ prophet declare, ỳ great excellẽt, & wõderful power of the worde of God. As yf he wolde say: Thou offreste me such kyndnesse (OLORDE) and fedest me so well and rychely at thy table, whiche thou hast prepared for me, that is: Thou endueste me so plenteously with the exceadynge knowlege of thy good worde, so that thorow the same

I haue not onely plenteous consolacion inwardly in my harte: agaynst myne owne euell conscience, agaynst feare and drede of death, and ꝑ wrath and iudgemēt of God: but outwardly also thorowe ꝑ same worde I am become so valeaunt and so inuincible a giaunt, ꝑ al myne enemyes can bryng nothynge to passe agaynst me. The more wroth, madde, and vnreasonable they are agaynst me, the lesse I regarde it. Yee I am so much the more quyete in my selfe, glad & content. And that of none other occasion, saue onely ꝑ I haue thy worde. The same geueth me such power and corage agaynst all myne enemyes: So that whan they rage fearsly and are mooste madde of all, I am better content in my mynde, then yf I satte at a table where I myght haue all that my harte coulde desyre, meate, drynke, myrthe, pleasure, mynstrelsye, &c.

In hye cōmendacīō of Gods worde.

There heareſt thou agayne, how hyghly this holy Dauid magnifyeth & prayseth the good worde of God, namely: how that by the same, they that beleue, ouercome and wynne the victory, agaynst the deuell, the worlde, the fleshe, synne, a mans owne conscience, and agaynst death. For yf a man haue the worde, and take sure holde of it by fayth, then muſt all theſe enemyes (whiche

els

els are inuincible) be fayne to geue backe, and to yelde them ſelues. And it is a marualous victory and power, yee and a very ſtoute boaſtynge of ſuche as beleue, ỳ they ſubdue and ouercome all theſe horrible (yee and in maner almyghtye) enemyes, not wt ragynge, not wyth bytynge, not wyth reſyſtynge, not with ſtrykyng agayne, not with takynge of vengeaunce, not wyth ſekynge of counſell and helpe here and there: but wt eatynge, drynkynge, pleaſure, ſyttynge, beynge mery and takyng of reſt. Which thynges (as it is ſayde afore) come all to paſſe thorowe the worde. For to eate and drynke is called in the ſcripture, to beleue, to take ſure holde on Gods worde, wherout ther followeth, peace, ioye, comforte, ſtrẽgth, &c.

To eate and drynke what it is

Natural reaſon can geue no iudgemẽt in this wonderfull victory of the faythfull, for here commeth the matter to paſſe cleane contrarye to the outwarde ſenſes of man. The worlde doth alwaye perſecute & ſlaye the Chriſten, as the mooſt hurtfull people vpon earthe. Now whan naturall reaſon ſeyth thys, it can not thynke otherwyſe but that the Chriſten lye vnder: & agayne, that theyr enemyes preuayle and haue the victory. Thus dyd the Jewes intreate Chriſte, the Apoſtles, and the faythfull, and put thẽ

The naturall reaſon of man.

euer

euer to execucion. Whan they had slayne them, or at the leest banished thē, then cryed they: Now haue we ꝑ victory: these fellowes that haue hurte vs, shall now trouble vs nomore: Now shall we handle euery thyng as we wyll. But whan they thought them selues to haue bene surest of all, our LORD & God sent vpon them the Romaynes, whiche dealte so horrible wyth them, that it is a terrible thynge to heare. Then after certayne hundreth yeares, as for the Romaynes (whiche thorow oute all the empyre of Rome had slayne manye thousande martyrs) God rewarded them afterward, and suffred the cytie of Rome in few yeares to be four tymes spoyled by ꝑ Gothies and Vandalyes, & finally to be brent, destroyed, and the empyre to decaye. Who had now ꝑ victory? The Jewes and Romaynes that shed the bloud of sayntes, lyke water? or the poore Christen, that suffred them selues to be ordred lyke slaughter shepe, and had none other harnesse and weapen, but the good worde of God?

Howe it goeth with the multitude of the that beleue in Christe.

Thus doth Dauid declare wyth these wordes, howe it goeth wyth the holy Christen congregaciō, (For he speaketh not here of his owne person only) setteth her forth in hyr coloures, and describeth her well fa-

uoured.

nouredly, Namely: how that in the syghte of God, she is euen as a pleasaunt grene medowe, whiche hath plentye of grasse and fresshe water. That is to say, that she is the paradyse and pleasaũt garden of God, garnysshed wyth all hys gyftes, and hath hys vnoutspeakeable treasure, the holy Sacramentes, and that good worde, wherewyth he instructeth, gydeth, refresheth, and cõforteth his flocke. But in the syght of ỹ worlde hath thys congregacion a farre other appearaunce, euẽ as though she were a blacke darke valleye, where a man can se nother pleasure, nor ioye: but trouble, sorowe, and aduersyte. For the deuell wyth al his power setteth hym selfe agaynst it, for thys treasures sake. Inwardly plageth he the congregacion of God wyth hys venymous fyrye dartes: Outwardly treadeth he her downe by sectes and offences. Then kyndleth he also hys brande vpon her, euen the worlde, which mynystreth vnto her all sorowe and heuyneſſe of harte, wyth persecutynge, sklaundrynge, blasphemynge, condemnynge, and murthurynge: In so muche that it were no wõder that deare flock of Christ were vtterly destroyed in the twynckynge of an eye, by such greate soltytye and myght, both of the deuell, and of the worlde. For she cãnot

kepe

kepe her selfe from hyr enemyes, they are farre to stronge, to deceatfull and to myghtye for her. She is euen as the prophet doth here describe her: An innocent, symple, and wapenlesse lambe, whiche nother wyll nor can do ony mã harme, but is alway readye not onely to do good, but also to take euell for good. Howe happeneth it then that the congregacion of Christ in such weaknesse, can escape the craftinesse and tyrãny of the deuell and the worlde? The LORDE is hyr shepeherde, therfore lacketh she nothynge. He fedeth and refresheth her, goostlye and bodely, he kepeth her in the rycht waye, he geueth her also hys staf and shephooke in steade of a swearde, which she beareth not in the hand, but in the mouth. And not onely comforteth the sorowfull therwyth, but dryueth awaye the deuell also and all hys Apostels, be they neuer so sotyll and spitefull. Besydes thys, the LORDE hath prepared for her also a table, and Easter lambe: When hyr enemyes are verye wrothfull, gnasshe theyr teethe together ouer her, are mad, vnreasonable, in a rage, and out of theyr wyttes, and take all theyr sotyltye, power, and myghte to helpe them, for to destroye her vtterlye: Then doth the beloued bryde of Christe set her downe at

Howe the flocke of Christ wineth.

hyr

hyr LORDES table, eateth the Easter-lambe, drinketh of the fresh water, is mery, and syngeth: The LORDE is my shepherde, I shall lacke nothynge. These are hyr weapens and gönes wherwith she hath hetherto smytten & ouercome all hyr enemyes, and after the same maner shall she haue the victorye stylle vnto domes daye. The more also that the deuell and ỳ worlde doth hurt & vexe her, ỳ better is it with her. For hyr edifyenge and increace stondeth in persecuction, affliction, and death. Out of thys occasion dyd one of the olde fathers saye: The blood of martyrs is a sede, where one is caste, there ryse an hundreth vp agayne. A notable sayenge Of thys wonderfull victory synge certayne Psalmes, as the. ix. x. & c. After thys same maner haue I also (thorowe the grace of God) behaued my selfe thys eyghtene yeare: I haue euer suffred myne enemyes to be wroth, to threate, to blaspheme and condemne me, to cast theyr heades stylle agaynst me, to ymagin many euell wayes, & to vse diuerse vnthryftye poyntes. I haue suffred them to take wonderous greate thought howe they myght destroye me and myne (yee gods) doctrine. Moreouer I haue ben glad and merye (but more at one tyme then at another,) and not greatlye regarded The authour of this boke

theyr

theyr ragynge, & madneſſe, but haue holden me by the ſtaf of cõfozte, and had recourſe vnto the LORDES table. That is: I haue cõmitted ẏ cauſe vnto God, wherin he hath ſo led me, ẏ I haue optayned all my wil and mynde. And in the meane tyme haue I done lytle oz nothinge, but ſpokẽ vnto hym a pater noſter, oz ſome lytle Pſalme. This is al my harneſſe, wherwith I haue defended me hetherto, not only agaynſt myne enemyes. but alſo thozow the grace of god, bzought ſo much to paſſe, that whan I loke behynde me, & call to remẽbzaunce how it hath ſtond in ẏ Papiſtrye, I do euẽ wonder ẏ ẏ matter is come ſo farre. I wold neuer haue thought ẏ the tenth parte ſhulde haue come to paſſe as it is now befoze oure eyes. ẏe that hath begon it, ſhal bzynge it well to an ende. Yee though hynehelles and wozldes were ſet on an heap together agaynſt it. Let euery Chziſten man therfoze learne thys ſcience, namely, ẏ he hold hym by this ſtaf & ſhepehooke, & reſozt vnto this table, whan heuyneſſe, oz ony other myſſoztune is at hande. And ſo ſhall he (douties) receaue ſtrength & cõfozte agaynſte euery thyng that oppzeſſeth hym.

The oyntment. The ſecond ſimilitude is of ẏ oyntmẽt, wherof ther is mẽciõ made ofttymes in the holy ſcripture. It was ſome pzecious oyle,

as

as Balme, or els som other swete smellinge water, & the vse was to anoynte the kynges & prestes withal. Whan the Jewes also held theyr solemne feastes, and were disposed to be mery, they dyd anoynte or sprenkle them selues wt such precious oyntmēt, as Christe declared lykewyse in the sixte of Mathewe, wher he sayeth: whan thou fastest, anoynte thyne heade, and wash thy face, &c. The vse then of this oyntmēt was had among those people, whan they were disposed to be mery & glad. Lyke as ỳ Magdalene also thought to make the LORDE mery, whan she poured vpon hys heade the precious water of Nardus, for she sawe that he was heuy.

The thyrde similitude is of the cuppe, which they broughte in theyr Gods seruice, whan they offered drynke offerynges, and were merye before the LORDE. Wyth these wordes then: Thou anoyntest my head with oyle, and fillest my cuppe ful wyll the prophete describe the greate ryche comforte which they that are faythfull haue by ỳ worde of God, so that theyr consciences are quyete, glad, and at rest in the myddes of all tentacions and troubles. Yee euen of death. As yf he wold saye: doutlesse the LORDE maketh me a maruaylous man of warre, and harnesseth me wonderously a-

The full cuppe.

The ryche comfort of christē mē

E.i. gaynst

gaynst myne enemyes. I thought he shulde haue put materiall harnesse vpon me, set an helmet vpon myne heade, geuē me a sweard in my hande, & haue warned me to be circūspecte, & to take diligent hede to my matter, lest myne enemyes shulde ouertake me.

Nowe commeth he and setteth me downe at a table, and prepareth me a goodly banket, anoynteth myne heade with precious Balme. Or (after the maner of our contry) setteth a garlande vpon myne heade, as yf I shulde go to some pastyme or daūsynge, and not fyght with myne enemyes. And to ỳ intent that ther shulde be no scarcenesse, he fylleth my cuppe full, ỳ I maye drynke, make, good chere, & be dronken. The table thē prepared is my harnesse, the precious oyntmēt is my helmet, & the ful cuppe is my sweard, With these do I ouercome all myne enemies. Is not this a maruailous preparyng to warre, & yet a more wonderfull victory? Thus wyll he saye: LORDE, thy gestes. whiche, syt at thy table, that is to saye, the faythfull shall not onely be stronge and valeaunt giauntes agaynst al theyr enemyes, but they shalbe mery also and dronken. For why? thou makest them good chere, as a ryche hoost vseth to do to his gestes: thou fedest them well, thou makest them lusty & glad,

Spirituall dronkēnesse

glad, thou fyllest into them so muche, that they must nedes be dronke. This is alone by the worde of grace. For by the same doth the LORDE oure shepherde fede and strength so the hartes of his faythfull, that they dare defye al theyr enemyes, and say wt the prophete: I am not afrayed for thousandes of the people that cõpasse me rounde aboute. Psalme. iii. And here afore in the fourth verse: I fear no euell, for thou LORDE art with me. With this (yee euen thorow the same) worde, doth he geue them also the holy goost, whiche maketh them not onely to take good stomackes vnto them, & to be of good corage, but so quyet also in thẽselues and merry, that for the same great exceadynge ioye, they are euen dronken.

This must be spiritually vnderstande.

He speaketh here then of a spirytuall strength, of a spirituall myrth, and of a spirituall dronkẽnes, which is a godly strẽgth Rom. i. A ioye (as saynt Paul calleth it) in the holy goost. Rom. xiiii. And a blessed dronkennesse, whan people are not full of wyne, (wherout followeth incõuenience,) but full of the holy goost. Epha. v. This is the harnesse & the weapens, wherwith our LORDE God prepareth his faythfull agaynst the deuell and the worlde, namely, in theyr mouth geueth he them hys worde, and in theyr

harte he geueth corage, that is to saye, the holy goost. Wyth suche ordinaunce put they from them all feare, and wyth gladnesse bukle they wyth all theyr enemyes, smyte them, and ouercome them with all theyr myght, wysedome, and holynesse. Such souldyers were the Apostels on whitsondaye, whan they went vp to Jerusalem agaynste the commaundement of the Emperoure and the hye prestes (and ordred thē selues, as yf they had ben very goddes, and all the other but greshoppers) and went euen thorowe with all power and ioye, as yf they had bene dronken. In so muche ỳ some had them in derision therfore, & sayd: They were full of swete wyne. Neuertheless S. Peter declared out of the prophet Joel, that they were not full of swete wyne, but ful of the holy goost. And so he smote aboute hym with hys swearde, that is: he opened his mouth, and preached the worde of God, and felled downe thre thousande soules at once from the power of the deuell. Actu. ii.

This strength, ioye, and blessed dronkennesse doth not onely shewe it selfe in the faythfull, whan they be in prosperite & haue peace, but also whan they suffre and dye. As whan the counsell at Jerusalem caused the Apostles to be beaten, they were glad of it,

st, that they were worthy to suffre rebuke for the name of Christe, Actu.v. And in the v. to the Romaynes doth saynt Paule say: We reioyce also in troubles. &c. Afterwarde were ther many martyrs also, whiche with merry harte and laughynge mouthes wente vnto theyr death, as yf they had gone to some pastyme or daunce: Lyke as we reade of saynt Agnes, and saynt Agatha (whyche were virgins. xiii. or .xiiii. yeare olde,) and of other mo, whiche were of suche inwarde corage and confydence, that they dyd not onely ouercome the deuell and the worlde by theyr death, but also made good chere euen then with theyr hartes, as though they had ben dronken of very ioye. And this greueth the deuell exceadynge sore, namely, whā men are at suche quyetnesse in them selues, that they despyse his great myght and gyle. In our tyme also haue ther be many which for the knowlege of Christe haue bene glad to suffre death. We se more ouer that ther be many, whyche wyth perfecte vnderstondynge and fayth dye vpon theyr beddes, and saye wyth Simeon: LORDE, now letteste thou thy seruaunt departe in peace, &c. that it is a ioye to beholde thē, of whom I haue sene many my selfe. And all this commeth because that (as the prophete sayeth) they

The stedfast & ioyfull hartes of them y haue fulfred death for ỳ word of God.

be anoynted with the oyle, whiche the. xliii. Psalme calleth the oyle of gladnesse, and because they haue dronke of the full cuppe whiche the LORDE hath fylled.

Objection

Yee but thou wylt saye: I fele not my selfe yet so apte, that I coulde be content to

Answere.

dye. &c. That maketh no matter. Dauid also (as it is sayd afore) hath not bene sure of that science at all houres, but somtyme complayned that he was cast out of gods syght. Other holy men also haue not alwaye had an hartye confidence towarde God, and a perpetuall delyte and pacience in theyr troubles and temptacions. Saynt Paul somtyme is so sure & certayne in hym selfe, and maketh suche boast of Christe, that he careth not for the curse of ỹ law, for synne, death, nor for the deuell. I lyue not nowe (sayeth he. Galat. ii.) but Christe lyueth in me. Item: I desyre to be lowsed and to be with Christ. Phil i. Item: Who shall separate vs from the loue of God, whiche spared not is owne sonne, but hath geuen hym for vs all? How shall he not with hym geue vs al thynges also? Shal trouble, anguysh, persecucion, swearde, &c. separate vs from hym? Ro. viii. There speaketh he of death, of the deuell, and of all euell with suche a corage, as yf he were the strongest and grea-

Note this well.

test

test of all sayntes, vnto whom death were but a sporte. But incontinently in another place, he speaketh as thoughe he were the weakest and greatest synner vpon earth. 1. Cor.ii. I was with you (sayeth he,) in weakenesse, in feare, and in muche tremblynge. I am carnall, solde vnder synne, and take prisoner in the lawe of synne, whiche is in my membres. O wretched man that I am, who shall delyuer me frō the body of this death? Roma.vii. And in the fyfth to the Galath. he teacheth that in the sayntes of God ther is a continual stryfe of þ flesshe agaynst the spirite. &c. Therfore oughtest thou not immediatly to dispayre, though thou feleste thy selfe feble and fayntharted, but praye diligently that thou mayest endure by þ worde, and increace in the fayth and knowlege of Christ. As the prophete doth here, & teacheth other men lykewyse so to do, and sayeth:

Oh let thy louynge kyndnesse and mercy followe me all the dayes of my lyfe, that I maye dwell in the house of the LORDE for euer.

Forasmuche as the deuell neuer ceasseth to plage the faythfull inwardly with feare, outwardely wyth deceatfulnesse of false doctours or teachers, and with the violence of tyrauntes: he prayeth here therfore

at the ende earneſtly, that God which hath geuen hym this treaſure, wyl kepe hym faſt by it alſo vnto the ende. And ſayeth: O gracyous God ſhewe me ſuch fauour, that thy louynge kyndneſſe and mercy maye followe me all the dayes of my lyfe. And immediatly he declareth what he calleth this louynge kyndneſſe and mercy, namely, that he maye remayne in the houſe of the LORDE for euer. As yf he wolde ſaye: Thou haſte begonne the matter, thou haſt geuen me thy holy worde, and accepted me amonge them that are thy people, whyche do knowlege, prayſe and geue thankes vnto the, graunt me therfore ſuch grace from hēce forth, that I maye continue ſtyll by the ſame worde, & neuer to be ſeparated more from thy holy Chriſten flocke. Thus doth he praye alſo in the.xxvi. Pſalme. One thinge (ſayeth he) haue I deſyred of the LORDE, whyche I wolde fayne haue: namely, ỳ I maye dwell in the houſe of the LORDE al the dayes of my lyfe, to beholde the fayre bewty of the LORDE (that is to ſaye, the true ſeruyce of God) and to vyſite his temple.

Why the prophet maketh this prayer.

A notable enſample.

The prophete then here by his enſample teacheth and exhorteth all ſuche as put theyr truſt in God, ỳ they be not careleſſe, proude, or preſūptuous in them ſelues, but

to

to feare and geue them selues vnto prayer, that they lese not this treasure. And doutlesse this earneste exhortacion shulde steare vs vp, and make vs feruent vnto diligent prayer. For seynge that holy Dauid whiche was a prophete, so hyghly endued with all maner of godly wysedome and knowlege, and with diuerse greate excellent gyftes of God. Seynge he (I saye) dyd praye so ofte and with such great earneste, that he myghte abyde by thys treasure. Much moze shall it be mete foz vs (whiche are vtterly nothynge to be compared vnto hym, and lyue also nowe at the ende of the wozlde, whan as Chriſte and the Apostles saye, it shalbe an hozryble and perylous tyme,) it shalbe muche moze conuenient (I saye) to watch and praye wyth all earneste and diligence, that we maye contynue in the house of the LORDE all the dayes of oure lyfe, namely, that we maye heare the wozde of God, and receaue the manyfolde commodityes and frutes that come of it, (as it reharsed afoze,) and continue in the same vnto the ende. Which graunte vs Chriſt, our onely shepherde and Sauioure.

We haue most nede to watch & praye.

AMEN.

E.d.

¶ How

and whether a Christē mā ought to flye the horrybie plage of the Pestilence.

¶ A sermon out of the .xci. Psalme Qui habitat in adiuto-

By Andrewe Osiander.

¶ Translated out of hygh Almayne into Englysche.

L N

A Sermon out of the Psalme, Qui habitat. &c. how and vnto what place a Christen man ought to flye the horrible plage of the pestilence.

FOr as much as Almyghty God doth vyset, handle, and punysshe the contry and region wyth the horrible and fearfull plage of the pestilence, and many folkes (after an vnmanerly fashion) are so afrayed therof, that ther be herde and sene of them all maner of vncostumable wordes and workes, whiche become not well a Christen man: And seynge that all the dedes of charite whyche one Christen man is bounde to shewe vnto another (no lesse thē vnto Christ him selfe,) are perlously omytted, wherby then ryseth all maner of sklaunder to the weake, and myscreporte vnto ỹ holy Gospell: I thought it profitable and necessary to bestowe vpon youre charite in this case a shorte instruccion and comforte out of the holy scripture, to the intent that the ignorant maye be taughte, the weake strengthed, and euery one counselled after hys callynge to serue his neghbour. And I wyll take for me ỹ. xci. Psalme, which soundeth after this maner:

Who

The.xci.pſalme.

Who ſo ſytteth vnder the defence of the hygheſt, and abydeth vnder the ſhadowe of the Almyghtye,

He ſayeth vnto the LORDE: My hope, and my ſtronge holde: my God on whom I truſt.

For he delyuereth me from the ſnare of the hunter, and from the noy ſome peſtilence.

He ſhall couer the wyth hys fe-thers, and thy truſte ſhalbe vnder hys wynges: hys truth is ſpeare and ſhylde.

So that thou nedeſt not to fear for the horrybleneſſe of the nyghte, for the arowes that flye by daye tyme.

For the peſtilence that commeth preuely in the darke, for the ſyckeneſſe that deſtroyeth in the noone daye.

Though a thouſãde fall at thy ſyde, and ten thouſande at thy ryght hande, yet ſhall it not come nye the.

Yee wyth thyne eyes ſhalte thou ſe thy deſyre, and beholde, howe the vn-godly ſhalbe rewarded.

But afore we come to the vnderstō dynge of these comfortable wordes, your charite shal fyrst knowe that it is not my meanyng to forbyd or inhibite ony man to flye or to vse phisycke, or to auoyde daungerous and sycke places in these fearfull ayres, so farre as a man doth not therin agaynst the belefe, nor Gods cōmaundement, nor agaynst his callynge, nor agaynst ẏ loue of his neghboure. For though some wyl saye: Such plage toucheth no man, but those that be ordeyned of God therevnto, lyke as ther be certayne ensamples therof foūde in the holy scripture: Namely how ẏ Ezech. 9. and Apoca. vii. ther was sent an angel, which aforehāde marked ẏ vertuous & electe, or euer it was charged & cōmaūded ẏ seconde angell to smyte (with pestilence or other plages) those ẏ were not marked. Neuertheles agaynst that it myght be sayde: Good syr, thoughe it wente so at suche a tyme in suche places, who maketh vs sure yet nowe, that it shall therfore chaunce so in all other deathes of the contry? Therfore wyll I now at this tyme let all suche thynges continue in theyr worthynesse and fre, lyke as all other natural thynges, whiche be subiecte and committed vnto oure reason to rule. But as for the Chri

What cases retayn a man in daungerous places.

sten, whiche (by reason of offyce, or for pouerte sake, or for other reasonable causes) can not, or be not mynded to flye, I wyll here withall shewe them theyr best and hyghest comforte that they haue.

In lyke maner, I wyll not entre agaynst them, that speake naturally therof: and saye: Suche plage commeth out of the influence of the starres, out of ꝑ worckynge of the Cometes, out of ꝑ vnseasonable wether and alteraynge of the ayre, out of the Southe wyndes, out of stynkynge waters, or out of foule mystes of the grounde: For such wysedome of theyrs wyll we leaue vnto them vndespysed, and not fyght there agaynst: But (as Christen men) we wyll holde vs vnto the worde of God, the same wyll we suffre to be oure moost hye wysedome, and geue credẽce vnto it, and follow it: and so shall we fynde muche better and surer instruccion: Namely, that this horrible plage of the pestilence commeth out of Gods wrath, because of the despysynge and transgressynge of his godly cõmaundementes. For thus sayeth the holy prophete Moses in the fyft boke, the.xxviii. Chapter.

The cause of pestilẽce and lyke diseases.

The chefe causes of pestilence is Gods wrath.

Yf thou wylt not herken vnto the voyce of the LORDE thy God, to obserue and kepe all hys commaundementes

dementes and ordinaunces whiche I commaunde the, then shal all these curses come vpon the, &c. And it followeth: The LORDE shall cause the pestilence to endure longe wyth the: the LORDE shall smyte the wyth swellynge, feuer, heate, burnynge, blastynge, drouth, &c. and shall persecute the tyll he vtterly destroye the, and brynge the to naught.

And certaynly this is the playne truth and the very originall of these plages. No man ought to doute theron. For thoughe the forsayd natural causes do somwhat also thereto, yet is it sure and vndouted, that the same causes be sent and steared vp oute of Gods wrath for our synne and vnthankfulnesse. And truely that it is euen so, the holy scripture declareth, not wyth bare wordes onely, but sheweth it also wyth notable ensamples. For in the fourth boke of Moses the fourteenth Chapter, whan all the spyes (excepte Josua and Caleb) spake euell of the lãde of promyse, and made the people vnpacionte and vprourysshe, so that they chose them a captayne, and thought to go agayne into Egypte, and to stone Moses and Aaron, (which commaunded them the contrarye) we reade thus: Then appeared the glorye of the LORDE, and spake vnto

Moses

Moses: howe longe doth thys people blaspheme me? And howe longe wyll they not beleue me, for all the tokens that I haue done vpon them: therfore wyll I smytte and destroye them with pestilence, and make of the a grater nacion then thys.

Lykewyse also whan Dauid caused the people to be nombred agaynste Gods commaundemēt, he displeased the LORDE God horibly therwith. Therfore layed he the punyshment vpon hym; so that he was fayne to chose hym selfe whether he had rather haue, seuen yeares derth, or thre monethes myschaunce in battayl, or thre dayes pestilence in the lande. And whan he chose the pestilence, ther dyed in thre dayes seuentye thousande men, as it is wrytten in the laste Chapter of the.ii.boke of Samuel.

Seynge then that out of the word of God we knowe the very cause of thys horryble plage: Namely, that it is the defaute of our synnes, as vnbelefe, disobedience & vnthankfulnesse: therfore before all thynges it shall be necessary, that we refrayne from the same, repent, and amende our lyues. Yf we wyll els be preserued and delyuered from thys horrible plage. ffor yf God punysh vs because of synne, it is good to consydre that we must fyrst knowlege and eschue our synnes, in case

Yf we amẽde not God contiyueth ī punyshynge.

that he shall withdrawe and take awaye hys wrath & punyshment from vs. ffor yf we cõtinue in our euell, synfull, and culpable lyfe, certaynly he shal not ceasse with the punyshment, but go forth more & more, tyll he geue and recompence accordynge to our workes. But yf we knowlege our synne, refrayne frõ it, repent, and axe grace, thẽ shall he also take awaye hys wrath. And thys horrible wrath (with other heuy burthens as warre & derth that lye vpon oure neck) shall he mercyfully take away from vs agayne. As holy Paule sayeth. i Cor. xi. Yf we iudged our selues, we shulde not be iudged: But whan we are iudged, we be chastened of the LORDE, that we shulde not be damned with the worlde.

And out of all thys maye youre charyte well perceaue, howe vnwyselye and vnchristenly they do, ỹ out of inordinate feare, of thys plage leaue theyr callynge and offyce, maliciously wythdrawyng the loue, helpe, & faythfulnesse, which they (out of gods commaundement) are bounde to shewe vnto theyr neghbours, and so do synne greuously agaynst the commaundement of God. ffor certaynly they do but steare vp the wrath of God more earnestly agaynste them selues, that he may the sooner take hold vpon them, and pluck them awaye with thys plage. ffor

men

men maye heare on euery syde, that some do shone and flye not only the syck, but also the whole: Yee (that yet moze foolyshe is) euen the platters and candelstyckes whiche come out of straūge houses, as though death dyd surely styck therin. And (out of suche fonde chyldyshe feare) it commeth, that not onely some syck folkes be suffred to dye away without all keppynge, helpe, and comfozte, but the wemen also greate wyth chylde be fozsaken in theyz nede, oz els commeth there vtterly no man vnto them. Yee a man maye heare also, that the chyldzen fozsake theyz fathers and mothers, and one household body kepeth hymselfe awaye from another, and sheweth no loue vnto hym: Whyche neuertheles he wolde be glad to se shewed vnto hymselfe, yf he laye in lyke necessitee. A pyteous case.

Howbeyt I suppose ther come not manye such chaunces to passe, neuertheless I must speake therof that it be done nomoze from hencefozth. ffoz certaynly it is vnwyselye & vnchzistenly handled: & we nede not thynke that the same is the waye to escape thys plage, but rather an occasion that it raygne the moze myghtely ouer vs. ffoz seynge it is sure (as ye haue herde afoze) that such plage is sent foz punyshment of oure synnes, and Chzistе hath geuen vs a new cōmaundemēt The moze we flye the punish ment, the farther

daunger we rũne in

that we shulde loue one another (as he hath loued vs) it followeth, that the farther we departe from the loue of our neghboure, the more we lade synne vpõ vs, and deserue thys plage but the more. Agayne the more diligẽtlye that we take hede vnto the loue of oure neghboure, the surer shall we be from thys plage: No man nedeth to doute therof.

No man ought to preasse in the daũger wythout necessite.

But here wythall wyll I also counsell or compell no man, to ony vnnedeful daunger, (that he is not bounde vnto by his callynge, nor by loue,) but onely warne those, whyche for feare leaue that whiche they are bounde to do before God: To the intent that for suche naked feares sake, they do not transgresse nor omytte the commaundemẽt of God, & hope by synne to escape this plage, which neuertheless cõmeth because of synne. For that were a foolysh vnaduysed counsel, yf one wolde go aboute to escape the wrath of God by transgression, and by synne to auoyde the punyshment of synne.

Besydes thys, doth experience shewe also that they which be so sore afrayed, do cõmunly miscary. Agayne, they that wayte vpon theyr offyces and serue theyr neghbours, be delyuered: As it is well sene in ỹ minysters of the churche and other mo, that shone not the syck, but muste vyset and comforte them

wyth

wyth Gods worde, and prouyde for them wyth the holy sacrament: For we se no where, that they therfore must also be soone syck and must dye. Yee how must the hygher powers of the worlde do, which (by reason of theyr callynge, and for the cõmune profyt & regimentes sake) abyde also in the toperdy, and must mynystre because of loue: Specyally ỹ chefest, on one wherof ther lyeth more, thẽ on a thousãd of other? And yet doth God cõmunly preserue thẽ also ỹ theybe delyuered left styl on lyue, and dye in a good quyet age.

Therfore certaynly such inordinate feare and flyenge agaynst Gods commaundemẽt is nothynge els, but a declaryng of a greate and forevnbelefe, that men do not beleue and trust in God, that he can and wyll delyuer. And thus is verifyed the sayenge: The vngodly haue no peace. Esay.lvii. For yf we wyll feare and flye where no parell is, whan wyll we then bestowe oure lyues for oure neghbours, as Christ hath done for vs? & we also be bounde to do lykewyse. 1. Jo.iii.

Unbeleke and mistrust in God is cause of flyenge

Who so now desyreth to escape ỹ wrath of God & thys horrible plage, let hym not are his own reason how he shal do, but beleue & follow ỹ word of God: which teacheth hym, not to flye euell ayre & infecte places (which he maye well do: neuerthelesse he remayneth

yet vncertayne wheter it helpeth or no) but it teacheth hym to leaue of from synne, as from the very originall cause of thys plage and punyshment, and (by true repentaunce and amendemēt of lyuyng) to walke agayne in the ryght waye. For ỳ is the onely sure & wholsome flyenge in thys daūgerous tyme, wherby a man may escape thys plage.

But whyther a man ought to flye, therof wyll we heare the holy goost by the prophete in thys psalm. He knoweth it much better then we can thynke, and sayeth after thys maner:

Who so sytteth vnder the defence of the hyghest, and abydeth vnder the shadowe of the almyghtye. He sayeth vnto the LORDE: My hope, and my stronge holde: My God on whom I hope. For he delyuereth me from the snare of the hunter, and from the noysome pestilence.

These wordes (my moste dearely beloued) shall ye take to hart, and marke them well wyth all diligence: For they be not the wordes of men whyche can lye and deceaue. Hewbeyt though they were mens wordes, & some olde wyse man spake them (or some well learned physician) ye wolde not yet despyse them, but receaue and kepe them. But now be they the very wordes of the hye maiestye

testye of God, which the holy goost speaketh by the mouth of the prophete. And they teach vs whether we ought to flye for thys plage, that we maye be safe. And certaynly they must nedes be the very truth: For heauen and earth must passe, but my wordes shall not passe, sayeth the LORDE.

But that ye maye vnderstande them ryght and well, ye shall remembre, that it is the vse of the holy scripture (specially in the psalmes) to declare one meanynge with two maner of sayenges, as ye haue oft tymes herde. For so doth the prophete here & sayeth: Who so sytteth vnder the defence of the hygheste, and abydeth vnder the shadow of the almyghtye. For to syt vnder the defence of the hygheste, is euen as much to saye, as to abyde vnder ỹ shadow of ỹ almyghtie. And with these wordes meaneth ỹ holy prophet nothynge els, but: who so putteth hys truste in God with a ryght sure Christē belefe, & geueth hymselfe ouer into his protection and defence, (For such people doth God receaue to grace) the holdeth he for his owne deare chyldren, (and euen so they be) and geueth them his holy spirite, whiche worketh in them very saluacion and godly workes. Therfore remaynneth he also vpō them, and all thynges must serue for theyr wealth, as

To syt vnder the defence of the hygheste

Paule sayeth Rom. viii. Suche protection also and defence of God, is set forth vnto vs euery where in the scripture, as an ouershadowyng & coueryng with wynges. For lyke as ỳ two Cherubins spred out theyr winges ouer the Arke: Exod. xxxvii. Euen so doth God spredeout the wynges of hys protectiō ouer hys electe. Therfore sayeth Moses Deuter. xxxii. Lyke as an Aegle steareth vp hys nest, and flyeth ouer hys ponge ones: so spredde he out hys fethers, and bare hys people vpon hys wynges. After this maner spake the holy angell Gabriell also vnto the mooste blessed and pure virgyn Mary, whā she shulde be the mother of God: The holy goost shall come vpon the, and the power of the hygheste shall ouershadowe the Luc. i. In lyke maner spake Christ also vnto Jerusalē: How oft wolde I haue gathered thy chyldren together, as an henne gathereth hyr chekens vnder hir winges, & ye wold not? Mat. xxiii. For though a true beleuyng man be in dede the temple of God, & God dwelleth in hym: yet vseth the scripture oft to speak therof, as though he dyd flye aboue vs (in asmuche as he doth ouershadow, couer, & defende vs:) and that because ỳ heauen and the heauen of all heauens (as Salomon sayeth) can not comprehende nor conteyn hym. iii. Reg. iii. But though

though he dwelleth in vs, yet flyeth he wyde, hye and lowe, not only on the outsyde of vs, but also on the outsyde and ouer all creatures. And so in all these wordes ther is nothynge els sayde, but: who so euer is a ryght beleuynge Christen.

Marke nowe then that he sayeth not: Who so is wyse, stroge, ryche, whole, or well frended. Nother sayeth he also: who so kepeth hym selfe thence, or flyeth thether, holdeth hymselfe well, or vseth good phisycke: but who so putteth hys trust in God. Not that the foresayd good thynges be euell, or maye not be had or vsed wyth profyte: But that they (where fayth is not) may euen as soone do harme as good, are in no wyse able to delyuer from the wrath of God. But what doth the beleuer: he sayeth vnto ỳ LORDE my hope. But this do not the vngodly and vnbeleuers, but set theyr hope in the forsayd poyntes, put theyr trust in them, and boast theron, and so commyt spiritual whoredom therwith, and make ydols therof. But to God do not they lyfte vp theyr eyes, nother thynke they vpon hym, nor feare hym. And whan he commeth then with hys wrath, and ouertaketh them wyth a plage, so ỳ of necessite they must nedes thynke vpon hym: than feare they, and be afrayed of hym, flye away,

They that misvse Gods creatures, cõmitte spirituall whoredome.

and knowe not where to abyde. Then vanysheth awaye theyr hope and boastynge, whych they (in tyme of prosperite) had vnto the creatures. And so commeth it to passe, ỹ theyr wysedome hath ben playne foolyshnesse: theyr strength, theyr own myssortune: theyr ryches, theyr owne destruccion: theyr health, theyr owne harme: theyr frēdes, theyr owne ypocrytes & traytours. ‡ And all that whyche they trusted vnto, can not helpe thē. Whan they wolde hyde themselues on the backsyde therof, it is euen as much as whan one hydeth hym behynde a ladder. And whan they wolde seke helpe thereby, it is euen lyke as yf a wolfe shuld defēde a shepe or a goose.

Horrible is the death and ende of the vnryghteous. Sapie. iii. ‡ Jo. viii, a Psal. i. b Pro. x. a. and. xi. a Eccli. v, b Jacob. i. b

But thus goeth it not wyth the beleuer: for who so putteth hys trust in ỹ LORDE, shal not be cōfounded. Therfore sayeth he not only that ỹ LORDE is his hope, but also hys stronge holde, whyche he maye flye vnto, in the whyche he maye shutte hymselfe close, and be delyuered therin. As Salomon sayeth in the. xviii. chapter of the Proverbes: The name of the LORDE is a stronge castel, the ryghteous flyeth vnto it, and shal be defēded. For ỹ vnbeleuers haue theyr hope euen in theyr goodes, but in necessyte they fynde not refuge, as ỹ faythful hath a strōge holde and hye castell in God the LORDE.

And

And though the vnbeleuers haue theyr whole wyll all theyr lyfe longe, yet hath it an euell ende, as it had wyth the rych man, whych was buryed in the hell. Luce. xvi. ffor who so beleueth not, shalbe damned. Agayn, though the faythfull be plaged and persecuted all hys lyfe longe, so that he can not se how he maye be delyuered, yet hath he thys comforte, that ꝑ LORDE is hys God: that is, that he can helpe & delyuer hym as an almyghty LORDE, yee after suche a fashion & waye, as nother he hymselfe, nor ony mans reason can thynke or deuyse. And thoughe he do it not, yet doth not the faythfull dispayre, but letteth ꝑ LORDE be his God, on whom he hopeth: that is, at whose hande he loketh for al good in the lyfe for to come and euerlastynge. ffor hope seyth and loketh on that whych is to come, whych as yet is hyd. As Paule sayeth Roma. the. viii. Chapter. Hope ꝑ is sene, is no hope for how can a mā hope ꝑ which is sene. But yf we hope that which we se not, we loke for it by pacience.

Extremus gaudii luctus occupat.

And so is this meanyng: The vnbeleuers haue theyr hope in the creatures, and are afrayed of God. The faythfull hath his hope to God, and is lorde ouer the creatures. The vnbeleuers myscary, and by the creatures fynde they no helpe in nede. The

The faythfull is lorde of all creatures.

faythfull myscary not, but God is vnto the a stronge holde. The vnbeleuers maye well haue theyr wylles as longe as they lyue, but at the last (thorow theyr dispayre) ther followeth euerlastynge damnacion. The faythfull may theyr lyfe longe haue disquyetnesse and tentacion, but at the last (thorow theyr hope) ther followeth euerlastynge lyfe.

Suche hope shulde they haue, and they haue it in dede, that though they must lye vnder as longe as they lyue, yet after death they shall enherete euerlastynge lyfe.. But certaynly it commeth not to passe, that they must alwaye lye vnder: ffor God is faythfull, and suffreth not his to be temted aboue theyr strength, but maketh the temtacion so to haue an ende, that we may bear it. i. Cor. x. Therfore sayeth the prophete more ouer:

For he delyuereth me frō the snare of the hūter, and frō the noysome pestilēce. And in these wordes doth he shortly shewe vnto vs, that almyghty God can and wyll delyuer his owne frō all misfortune yet euen in this lyfe. ffor al the myschaunces that we be troubled wythall in thys temporall lyfe, are of two sortes: Some come out of ỳ wycked deuyce of the deuell and of mē, as shame and persecucion. Some playnly of nature and out of the ordinaunce of God, as tempest

Two maner of myschaunces.

pest and pestilence. The faythfull nowe beleueth and maketh hys boast, that these myschaunces can not be so greate and myghtye, but God shall delyuer hym there from.

And it is a goodly naturall similitude, that he lykeneth the euell and wycked deuyce of the vngodly agaynste the faythfull, to a nette or snare of the hunter. For lyke as an hunter prouyeth the kynde and nature of euery wylde beast, cõmeth pryuely after hym, seketh out ỳ course & habitacion therof, and afterwarde setteth the nette, ỳ he may dryue it therin: Euen so do the vngodly also vnto the ryghteous. Fyrst, they loke how they be mynded. Yf ony one be fre of langage, then set they hym on fyre that he may speake somwhat sharpely, as saynt Steuen dyd. Actu. the.vii. Chapter. Yf he be gẽtle and frendly, then ymagen they some foolyshe thynge vpõ hym, and flatter awaye hys harte frõ hym, as Dalila dyd vnto Samson. Yf he seke the saluacion of the people, then sklaunder they hym, as ỳ Jewes blasphemed Thryst to be a wyne supper and a companion of publicãs. Yf he be symple, then lye they vpon hym behynde hys backe, or euer he be ware therof: Then followe they vpon hym, crye, lye, and complayne, that the vertuous Thrystẽ man woteth not what poynte to be at, or how he hath

The similitude of the wycked vnto a hunter.

Iudi.xvi.

Math.xi.

Psal. cxxix.

hath deserued it. Neuertheless they thynke the bell is so cast, ỳ at the last it must rynge as they wyll, but it fayleth them.

1. Cor. x. ii. Pet. ii.

For the LORDE on whom we beleue, which is our hope, refuge, and God, can not only preserue vs from theyr snares that we fall not therin: but also whan we fall into them, and they thynke we be theyr captiues, he can and wyll delyuer vs yet therout. In lyke maner doth God the LORDE preserue hys faythfull, not onely from the noysome sycknesse of the pestilence, but also whan they be taken therwyth and infecte already, he delyuereth them from it, and maketh thẽ whole agayne. But how that commeth to passe, and howe we shall vnderstande it, it shall followe here after more clearely.

Why the pestilence is a noysome sycknesse.

Thys is nowe well to be marked also, that the pestilence is a noysome sycknesse, not because it bryngeth death: (for that do al other mortal sycknesses lykewyse, and death is no losse vnto the faythfull, but auaũtage, as Paule sayeth, Philip. the fyrst Chapter) but because that it taketh awaye the people very sodenly, vnloked for, and vnwares: Wherout thẽther followeth, stryfe, lawyng, or busynesse amonge synners, and of the comune welth, as euery man by hymselfe can lyghtely perceaue and vnderstande. Therfore

fore is it also an horrible punyshment ouer the synne of the worlde, whyche concerneth both them that dye, and them that are lefte alyue, as here after it shall followe.

Pestilēce is an horrible punyshment.

Where as is nowe suche a fayth as geueth credence vnto God, he shall preserue hym from all wycked ymaginacions of mē, lykewyse from all noysome syckenesses. And at the last shall he saue hym, that continueth not wythout frute, but breaketh out wyth ryght loue and faythfulnesse towarde hys neghboure, and desyreth also to bringe hym vnto that poynte, that he maye beleue and be partaker of all suche goodes and benefites of God. Therfore doth the prophete turne hys wordes now also vnto hys neghboure, and sayeth farthermore:

He shall couer the wyth hys fethers, and thyne hope shalbe vnder hys wynges. That is: Yf thou also wylt put thy trust in hym, thou shalte fynde it so lykewyse. For he sheweth such his benefytes vnto all and euery one that put theyr truste in hym. As for the couerynge of hys fethers, and hope vnder hys wynges, youre charite hath herde ynough afore what it is.

Now though all faythfull loke for suche helpe at God, and it happeneth vnto them, yet is it not done without a speciall battayll

of

offayth. ffor ſuche helpe doth he promyſe vs in hys holy worde, that we ſhulde beleue it. And yf we beleue it, it happeneth vnto vs accordynge to oure fayth. Therfore ſayeth the prophet more ouer: hys truth is ſpeare and ſhylde That is hys godly promyſes, whych are ſure and true, & nother lye nor deceaue: Thoſe be our weapens wherwyth we fyght, and ouercome all aduerſyte. But lyke as ſpeare & ſhylde are not profytable vnto hym that can not vſe them, nor wyll: Euen ſo alſo do not the promyſes of God profyte hym, that can not fyghte therwyth, and wyll not beleue theron. ffor that is the ryght ſcyence in this battayll whan myſſortune, aduerſite or tentacion commeth, that we loke aboute vs accordynge vnto Gods worde: Namely, what comforte and promyſe he hath made vnto vs in ſuche a caſe, & wyth a ryghte beleſe to take holde of the ſame as of a ſhylde, and to comforte and defēde oure ſelues therwith, ſo can ther no miſchaūce do vs harme, as the holye Saynt Paule in the laſt chapter of hys Epiſtle to ỹ Epheſians teacheth and ſayeth: Before all thynges take ỹ ſhylde of fayth, wherwyth ye maye quenche all the fyrye dartes of the wycked, &c.

The weapens of fayth

The ſcience of the warre of fayth

Agaynſte the ſame (namelye agaynſte Sathan oure head enemye) is ſuche worde

of

of God, euen ỳ ryghte speare, wherwith we
wounde and ouercome hym. ffor no bodely wapen hurteth and hyndreth men so sore, as the worde of God stoppeth and hyndreth Sathan yf it be thrust vnder hys nose agaynste hys venymous dealynge and temtacion. ffor yf a seruaũt (that dealeth wrongeously and vnthriftely in hys maysters goodes & busynesses) be afrayed, vexed, and persed thorowe the harte, whan a symple man sayeth vnto him: Thou vnthrift why doost thou so? that is not thy maysters wyll and meanynge, he dyd not so cõmaunde the. Howe much more goeth it thorowe Satans harte, whan a vertuous Christen man holdeth the worde of God vnder hys eyes, and bryngeth witnesse ouer hym, that he as a wycked creature hãdleth agaynst hys maker, & agaynst hys chosen chyldren? Therfore doth holye saynte Paule call Gods worde also the swearde of the spryte: And the LORDE Christe defendeth hymselfe onely wyth the same agaynste all temtacions of Satan in the wylderneſſe.

Nothynge hurteth the Deuell so sore as the worde of God.

Mat. iiii.

Nowe whan thou takest holde thus of Gods promyses thorow fayth, and vsest thẽ for speare and shylde to defende thy selfe, and to smyte Satan, then out of the same it followeth as the prophete sayeth farther:

That thou nedest not to feare for the

horrybleneſſe of the nyght,

For the arowes that flye in the daye tyme.

For the peſtilence that commeth pryuely in the darke,

For ſyckeneſſe that deſtroyeth in the noone daye.

ffor theſe foure aduerſites ſet forwarde and ſhorten the lyfe of the vnbeleuers: But the faythfull hath ſuch conſolacion and promes, that he nedeth not to be afrayed. ffyrſt for the horrybleneſſe of the nyght. That is, for all maner of tentacion and deceate, that happen vnto men by nyght in the darkneſſe. ffor thys we all perceaue, that in the nyght and in the darkneſſe, we are weaker mynded, of more deſpayre, and more afrayed then in the lyghte. The bloude runneth to oure hartes, & the heeres ſtonde vpryght, and all the body wareth colde for feare. Out of thys cōmeth it thē, that we thynke we ſe, heare & perceaue ſomwhat, which in very dede is not ſo. Then goeth ther one aſtray, another leſeth hys coloure, ỹ thyrde falleth ſycke, ỹ fourthe is become crocked, the fyfthe goeth out of hys wyt. And ſo men thynke, that the deuell hath done it, where as it is yet a playne natural worckynge of ỹ exceadynge grete feare, whyche wolde deſtroye a man euen by daye tyme

The horribleneſſe of the nyghte.

tyme, yf it were so greate. Howbeyt true it is that ỳ deuell causeth such feare, and prynteth it in, ỳ he maye begile and destroye vs by feare, as by a naturall worckynge: Yet is it nothynge but a feare. ffor the prophete calleth it not an euel or good spyrete, but planely the horrybleneſſe of the nyght. Nother is it ony thynge els also but an horrour & feare. and continueth an horrour and feare.

The deuell is cause of horrybleneſſe.

Therfore where a ryght belefe is, there is no feare. Where no fearfulneſſe is, there is also no horrour, nor fătasye of spyretes, or deceatfulneſſe of the nyght, but playne corage and boldneſſe. Yf onye thynge els be sene (as fyre or lyghte,) they be but naturall thynges, out of the heate of the ground, lyke as lyghtenynges, draggons, fallyngestarres and cometes be in the ayre and in the heaue. But here wythall wyll not I speake agaynſt the wonderfull visions and tokens, whyche god sendeth for a warnyng be for greate myſchaunces to come.

The cause of lygtenynges and such lyke.

Secondarely, is the faythfull sure for the arowes that flye in the daye tyme. That is, all maner of myschaunces which ouertake a man openly in the daye: and yet so sodenly and vnwares, that he can not escape them. As whan a tyle falleth from the roofe of an house, whan a wycked beast doth euell, or

The arowes in the daye tyme

whan an vngracious perſonne doth hurt in body, name, or good. ffor ſuche miſfortunes come for the mooſt perte ſo ſodenly, ỹ a man can not preuente them, but muſt let them hyt as wyth an arowe, and afterward reſtore & heale the harme wyth greate trauayle and laboure. But nowe wyll God preſerue hys faythfull from ſuch miſfortune, yf they haue hys promuyſes before theyr eyes, beleue theron, and order theyr lyues therafter.

The peſtilence.

Thyrdly, a faythfull perſon nedeth not alſo to be afrayed for the peſtilence, that ſlyppeth in preuely in the darke. Thys is verely a comfortable promyſe in thys daungerous tyme, for the whiche we ſhulde by ryght put oure truſt in God, and thanke him therfore, for aſmuch as it is one of the mooſt perlous and horryble plages, wherwyth he viſyteth and punyſſheth the ſynne of the worlde. ffor it taketh hold of lyfe vnwares, and plucketh a man awaye in two or thre dayes, (or euer he can order hys buſyneſſe and houſe, & make hys teſtament) creepeth in preuely in ỹ darke, ſo that no man knoweth what it is, or whẽce it commeth, or whyther it goeth: therfor can no man kepe hymſelfe ſurely from it.

ffor yf it were in meate or drynke, it myghte be eſchued: Yf it were an euell tayſt, it myght be expelled wyth a ſwete ſauoure:

Yf

Yf it were an euel wynde, the chãbre myghte wyth diligence be made close therfore: Yf it were a cloude or myst, it myght be sene, and auoyded. Yf it were a rayne, a man myghte couer hym selfe for it. But now is it a secret myssortune, that crepeth in preuely, so that it can nother be sene nor herde, nother smelled nor taysted tyll it haue done the harme.

The more daungerous the pestilence is, the more excellent is the promyse.

Therfore the more daungerous and noysome that the plage is, the better & more excellent is the promyse, that no man shulde haue cause to despayre: ffor how might God make vs a more excellent and fayrer promyse, then that he promyseth to delyuer frõ the pestilence, vs that be hys chyldren, and that we nede not to be afrayed therof, though a thousande dye of the same at oure leftsyde, and ten thousãde at our ryght syde? Yet shall it not reach vnto vs, yf we do but beleue thys promyse, and let it be oure speare and shylde: ffor yf we so do, then shall suche poysoned arowes eyther not hytte vs at all, or els not wounde vs to death.

The syckenesse that destroyeth in the noone daye.

ffourthly, God wyll also preserue hys chyldren from the syckenesse that destroyeth in the noone daye: ffor the noone day (whan the Sonne is at the strongest) is cause of muche heate and feuerous syckenesse, specyally in those contryes, where the Sonne ry-

ſeth hye, and commeth nye ouer mens heades. ffor greate heate bryngeth much ſweate, conſumeth and altereth the bloude, cauſeth inordinate drynkynge, and maketh that the people are gladde to coole thē ſelues agayne foolyſhly: Wherout then aryſe all maner of perlous diſeaſes, whyche be not very vnlyke the ſyckneſſe of the peſtilence.

Now whether it be feare of the nyght, or arowe of the daye: whether it be peſtilence or ſyckneſſe, that commeth by the euel Southe wynde, or what plage it wyl that lyeth vpon the worlde because of theyr ſynnes, God the LORDE wyll preſerue hys faythfull there from, or delyuer them from it: and that ſhall come to paſſe ſo certaynly and ſo wonderfully, that (as the Prophete ſayeth) thoughe a thouſande fal at thy left ſyde, and ten thouſāde at thy ryghte ſyde, yet ſhal it not touche the. Thys is doutleſſe a louynge, mercifull, cōfortable, and fayre promyſe, wheron oure hart by reaſon ſhulde truſte, and chefely reioyce in the ſame. ffor he that ſpeaketh it, is Almyghty and true: therfore ſhulde we by reaſon geue credence vnto hym. ffor we can do God no greater dyſhonoure, then to dyſpayre in hys holy worde. We oughte therfore to be much more afrayed of the inordinate feare, then of death it ſelfe: for death can

not

not hurt vs, in asmuch as we (thorowe bapteyme) are grafted and buryed vnto like death with Christ. But fearfulnesse (whych is nothynge els but an vnbelefe) maye harme vs, and brynge vs into imprudence. Wherfore my mooste dearely beloued, take these promyses to harte, strength youre hart, mynde, and vnderstandynge therewyth, and be not fayntharted. So shal ye proue by experience, that God is true, and faythfully performeth that whyche he promyseth.

Fearfulnesse doth mooste hurte

And that ye maye the more easely beleue it, I wyll declare it vnto youre charite by a symilytude howe it commeth to passe, and whence it springeth, that a ryght faythfull Christen man can be so safe and free from all these plages: For it is good to vnderstande, and comfortable to knowe.

Youre charyte seyth and prouethdayly by experience, howe myghtye & horrible thynge the darknesse of the nyght is. For whan it falleth, it couereth all ỹ whole world, darkeneth the coloure and fashion of all creatures, captiuateth all men and beastes lyuyng, that they must be styll and rest, yee & maketh them fayntharted and fearfull, and so of all thynges it is a myghty inuincible tyraunt, whom no mã may withstãde. Neuertheles it is not yet so myghtye, that it can darken,

A similitude of the darcknesse of the nyght.

ouerwhelme, and quench the leaſt lyght that is founde in the worlde. For we ſe, that the darker the nyght is, the clearer do the ſtarres ſhyne: Yee the leeſt candle lyght that is lyghted, withſtandeth ỹ whole nyght, & ſufreth not onely the darkneſſe not to couer or oppreſſe it, but geueth lyght cuẽ in the mydes of the darkneſſe, and ſmyteth it backe a certayne ſpace on euery ſyde: and thyther as it is borne, muſt darkneſſe depart, and geue place vnto the lyghte: all the power and fearfulneſſe therof, can not helpe agaynſt it.

The candle lyghte ouercommeth darkneſſe.

And though a lyght be ſo weake, that it geueth not lyght farre aboute it, nother can ſmyte the darkneſſe abacke (as the ſparke of an whotecole) yet can not the darkneſſe couer it, much leſſe to quenche it: but it geueth lyght it ſelfe alone, ſo that it maye be ſeene a farre of in the darkneſſe, and remayneth vnouercome of the ſame, though it cã not helpe other thynges, nor geue lyght vnto them.

Yee (that yet more wonderfull is) a rotten ſhynynge pece of woode, whiche neuertheleſſe hath the fayntеſt lyghte that can be founde, remayneth inuincible of all the power of darckneſſe: and the more it is compaſſed aboute wyth darckneſſe, the clearer lyght it geueth, ſo lytle can darckneſſe ouercome or hold downe ony lyght: but it ruleth van-

vanquysheth, and expelleth the darkenesse, whych els ouerwhelmeth, snareth, & putteth all thynges in feare.

Euen so lykewyse doth a well spryngе also, for there maye we se, how a lytle vayne of water breaketh out of the grounde, somewhere scarce so great as a fynger. And whan it is closed in rounde aboute that the water maye gather together, and must nedes be a dych or a pyt, yet spryngeth it neuertheless. And though the water be certayne hundreds weyght aboue the spryngе, yet maye not it dryue the spryngе backe, but the spryngе dryueth the whole burthen of the water backe, and aboue it selfe, and spryngeth styll more and more, tyll the pole flow ouer. And yf the other water be foule and vncleane, it cā not myxte it selfe vnder the freshe clere water of the spryngе, but it remayneth clere tyll it come farther abrode from the fyrste heade therof, as it maye all be sene wyth eyes, and also be proued by daylye experience.

A similitude of a spryngе of a well

Yf a naturall lyghte then be so myghtye agaynste the darkenesse of the nyghte, & an earthen well spryngе so stronge in strykynge agaynst all standynge waters: howe muche more doth it then the true euerlastynge and heauenly lyght, and the onely inuyncible spryngе of all lyfe, namely, God

the LORDE oure maker and Sauioure.

God is a true lyghte

That God is ỹ true, euerlastynge and heauenly lyght, wytnesseth Jhon the euãgelist in the fyrst Chapter, & sayeth: God was the worde, in hym was the lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyghte of men. Lykewyse also in hys Canonicall epistle in ỹ fyrst Chapter: God is lyght, and in hym is no darknesse.

God is a quicke spryngе.

In lyke maner, That he is the onely inuincyble spryngе of all lyfe, wytnesseth the prophete Jeremy in the seconde chapter off or there sayeth the LORDE: My people commytteth a dubble synne, they forsake me the lyuynge spryngе of lyfe, and make them selues fayre welles, whyche neuertheless geue no water. And Dauid sayeth in the.xxxv. Psalme: Wyth the is the spryngе of lyfe, and in thy lyght se we light.

Yf God the LORDE thẽ be ỹ true lyght, it followeth, that all they whiche put theyr trust in hym, be as a burnynge candle: for by fayth doth God dwell in our hartes, and we are the lyuynge tẽple of God, as Paule to the Corinthians doth wytnesse more thẽ once. Therfore sayeth Christe of hys disciples. Math.v. Ye are the lyght of the worlde And of Jhon the Baptyste: he was a burnynge and shynynge lyght. Joh.v. Lykewyse yf God be the euerlastynge lyuynge fountayne

tayne, it followeth, that the faythfull be euen flowynge sprynges. Therfore sayeth Christ also, Joh.vii. Who so beleueth on me as the scripture sayeth, out of hys body shall flowe streames of lyuyng water: But this he sayd of the sprete, whiche they that beleue on hym shulde receaue.

Lyke as the darkenesse of the nyght nowe can hurte no earthly or wordly lyght, but must geue place and flye from ẏ lyght: Euen so Sathan also whyche is a prynce of spirytuall darkenesse, can do no harme to a true ryghte beleuyng Christen mā, but must feare and flye from hym: For God, whyche is the euerlastynge lyghte, dwelleth and shyneth in hys hart, and dryueth and expelleth farre from hym all the workes of darknesse. And lyke as no heape of water can dryue backe ony fountayne of ẏ grounde, and hynder the quycke sprynge therof, and lyke as no vnclennesse can make it foule: euen so also can no aduersyte of this worlde take awaye or shorten ony Christen mans lyfe. For God whyche is the fountayne of all lyfe, dwelleth and lyueth in hys harte, & dryueth all hurtfull poyson and mortall sycknesse farre awaye from thence, so ẏ not only it can not harme hym, but he also helpeth other people, and delyuereth them by hys presence:

euen

euen as a lyght that shyneth farre aboute it, and as a sprynge ẏ alwaye floweth, runneth and maketh the grounde moyst an frutefull.

And thys is it that the LORDE sayeth in the Gospell, in the last of Marke: The tokens that shall followe them whyche beleue, are these: In my name shall they cast out deuels, speake wyth new tunges, dryne away serpentes: & yf they drynke ony deadlye thynge, it shall not hurte them: They shall laye handes vpon the sycke, and they shall recouer. So is it red also in the Actes of the Apostles the.v. Chapter, that the sycke were made whole onely of saynt Peters shadow. So vtterly must vanyshe euery thynge that is contrary and agaynste the euerlastynge lyghte, and sprynge of lyfe, where a ryght Christen man is, in whom God dwelleth by a true belefe, and out of whome the holy goost shyneth and floweth.

Let Sathan then preasse in here wyth all hys darknesse and wyth all hys hurtfull infection, yet shall ye se in belefe, that he can not take nor destroye ony Christen mā therwyth yf he continue in fayth, and kepe God in hys harte: But he shalbe smytten backe and dryuen awaye by force, as ẏ wonderfull workes of Christe and of all sayntes do manyfestly declare. Therfor is it a great shame

Satan is dryuen back by fayth

for

for a Christen man to be so afrayed for the plage of the pestilence, as to flye from them whome he is bounde to serue by Gods commaundement. ffor by reason he shulde wyth out al feare make haiste vnto them, not onely to fulfyll Gods commaundemente, but also by hys presence to helpe them, yf theyr fayth do els worke wyth all. But yf it come not to passe, yet is he sure, for as much as God dwelleth in hym, and he walketh and goeth in Gods commaundement. ffor certaynly thys promyse shall not fayle hym:

It is a greate shame for a Christen man to feare the pestilence

Though a thousande fall at thy syde, and ten thousande at thy ryght syde, yet shall it not touch the.

But wyth fayth must these wordes be taken holde vpon, for naturall reason doth not comprehende them, in as muche as in dede it appeareth farre otherwyse. And no man nedeth to thynke nor iudge, that they whyche dye of thys plage, be all vnchristen and faythlesse: but we ought not to doute but that ther dye therof many vertuous mē, and leaue many vngodly.

Thys is done, because that death maye happen to a mā two maner of wayes. One waye, after the commune course of nature, accordynge as euery mans death is appoynted hym of God, and we haue consented vn-

Naturall death happeneth two wayes

to

to it in baptyme. Of thys sayeth the prophet Job in the .xiiii. Chapter. A man hath hys appoynted tyme, the nõbre of hys monethes standeth wyth the: thou hast appoynted him hys boundes, whyche he shall not ouerpasse.

Another waye maye death happen to a man before the tyme, by reason of hys greate & greuous synnes: As ỳ LORDE hath threatened by Moses, that yf hys cõmaundement be not kept, he wyll cause pestilẽce to reygne. Wherout it is certayne, that whan they be kepte, ỳ plage abydeth out. Lykewyse sayeth he in the commaundementes: Honour father and mother that thou mayest lyue longe, &c. Out of the whyche it is certayne, that hys lyfe whyche doth them not, shalbe shortened. In lyke maner sayeth Dauid in the .lv. Psal. The bloudthyrsty shall not bryng theyr lyfe to the halfe nombre. Wherout it is sure that they shulde lyue muche longer, yf they shed not innocent bloud. Lykewyse sayeth Christ Luce .xii. Yf ye do not repent, ye shall all perysshe, as they that the tower in Siloa fell vpon. Where by it is certayne, that who so repenteth not, maye loke for all myssortune.

Hys lyfe that keepeth not Gods commaundementes shalbe shortened.

And of thys vntymely death onely speaketh thys Psalme, and prompteth the faythfull Christen men, that they shalbe fre from it. For from the ryght appoynted death into

the

the whyche we haue consented in baptyme, we can not shalbe delyuered. Wherfore yf a vertuous ryghte Christen man dye of thys plage, it is certaynly hys very houre appoynted vnto hym of God, whyche he can not preuente. But doutlesse ther dye of it many synners also besyde, whyche myghte well lyue longer yf they repented. And though some be taken because of theyr synnes, yet be they not therfor damned: but yf they are forgeuenesse of synnes and beleue, they shall be saued. As Paule sayeth: When we be iudged, we are chastened of ỳ LORDE, that we shulde not be condemned wyth the worlde.

Thus goeth it then together, that iuste men dye theyr owne ryght death, but ỳ wycked dye an vntymely death, and therwyth doth God punyshe the worlde forest of all because of theyr synnes, but spareth hys owne for theyr fayches sake. Therfore shulde they not be fearful nor fayntharted, but (as ỳ prophete sayeth) they shulde loke & beholde, how the vngodly are recompenced: For whether the wycked dye before the tyme, or the iuste in ỳ ryghte season, yet is it done both for the punyshement and plage of the vngodly. Yf vertuous fathers & mothers dye from wycked dysobedient chyldren, then be the chyldren plaged, for they are afterwarde euell nur-

God punyeth men by the death of other.

murtoured, hanged or slayn. Yf yonge chyldren dye from wycked fathers and mothers, then be the chyldren delyuered, & the fathers and mothers punyshed, in that they haue gathered theyr goodes for those that they wyshe them not vnto. Yf tyrauntes dye, then be they punyshed, and the persecuted Christen delyuered. Yf good rulers dye, which wyth theyr wysdome haue maynteyned peace and good gouernaunce, then be they in peace: And so the vngodly whyche are left alyue, rayse vp warre and sedicion, and be alwaye punyshed worse and worse. Shortly who so hath eyes of fayth, seyth ỳ true beleuers dye in a ryght season, but ỳ vngodly before the tyme. Wherfore whether good mẽ dye or lyue, it is done for theyr welthe. But whether the wycked dye or lyue, it is done for theyr punyshment, and by all wayes shall they be plaged, and theyr wyckednesse shall be rewarded them.

Good mẽ dye or lyue for theyr welth, but ỳ wycked for theyr punyshment.

Wherfore my moost derely beloued, take ye such doctrine & comforte to harte, and follow ỳ same. Flye in good earnest (by true repentaunce & amendement) from synne, wherwyth the world hath deserued thys horryble plage: And flye by a true vpryght fayth vnto Gods word, wherin is the fountayne of lyfe and ỳ lyght of men: Then shall ye be whole and safe from thys and other plages,

and

se lyue to the honoure of God and welth of your neghbour, tyll the appoynted tyme come, wherin God the father (in the death of Thrist that we be baptised in) shal sende for vs out of thys myserable lyfe to hys owne euerlastynge kyngdome: Which God graūt vnto vs all. Amen.

How they ought to be comforted that are in bodyly sycknesse or trouble.

DEarly beloued brother I truste ye beleue that all thynges, whether it be sycknesse, anguyshe, or what missortune so euer it be, it commeth all from almyghtye God. ffor yf he be your faythfull father, thā doth he it to your furthevaunce that he taketh holde on your olde Adam, and leadeth hym presoner wyth thys bonde of your sycknesse, and helpeth you to tame and to mortyfy hym, that ye maye yelde youre selfe the better vnto your LORDE God, and hange on the crosse wyth Thriste. ffor thys cause is suche sycknesse of yours a fatherly chastenynge: ffor whome God loueth, hym doth he chasten. And of hys fatherly mercy

Rom. viii. All thynges serue for the beste vnto thē that loue God.

Heb. xii.

taketh he thus holde vpon you wyth very truthe and loue. Happely he seyth that your olde Adam wyll be to wanton and rash for you, and waxeth to stronge & fearce for you. And for thys cause putteth the LORDE a brydle into hys mouth, whereby he be not hurtfull vnto your noble soule and myscary her. Flesh and bloude is stronger in you thā the sprete, therfore helpeth he your sprete to fyghte. Perchaunce yf ye were whole, it myghte entyce you to synne agaynste God, whereby hys holy name myghte be blasphemed, and so were youre soule the more cursed for ye fylthynesse of manyfolde synnes. But nowe doth he auoyde all that from you thorow fatherly mercy, and turneth awaye youre flesh and bloude that alwaye rageth
Rom. vii. agaynste the sprete, and leadeth it captiue, so that it hath nomore rowme nor occasion to couet all maner of synnes.

Seynge than that hys fatherly wyll is suche, and that suche thynges do happen vnto you to good, therfore do I earnestly admonysh you that by no meanes ye do wythstande hys fatherly wyll, but praye hartely, that hys wyll be done and fulfylled in you vnto hys prayse. And hābly beseke to graunte you his mercy, tha tye may beare thys crosse
Rom. v. of hys paciently: For pacience bryngeth experience,

perience, experience bryngeth hope, but hope letteth vs not come to confusion. Thus haue ye nowe occasion to be patiente, and wyllyngly to suffre al maner of thynge that God sendeth vnto you, for so muche as ye perceaue in your harte, that he meaneth the thynge in very dede, and thys commeth by tryenge. For wythout ye assaye it wyth the dede how good it is so to retayne the LORDE. (as Dauid sayeth: It is good to my that I haue ben in trouble, ỳ I maye learne thy ryghteousnesses) ye can not hope and truste in hym: In so muche as ye haue not assayed that such fatherly loue is hyd vnder thys rodde. Pſal. cxviii.

But whan ye haue perceaued suche a thynge, than are ye bolde in all sufferynge, and take hope vnto you, the lõger the more seynge God doth so truely assiste you. And though he do let you syncke a lytle whyle & styck faste, yet doth he drawe you forth agayne, though it be longe. He suffreth you a lytle to swymme and to doube, but not to drowne. Wherby ye maye perceaue that he wyll neuer forsake you, whyche hath so ofte and many tymes ayded you. Yf he doth bryng you sometyme in greate anguyshe, so that ye myght thynke it all to be done wyth you, yet forsake hym not, but let your truste Dan. xiii.

and hope remayne faste and sure in hym: for ye haue heretofore learned well ynough the propertye and nature howe he goeth aboute wyth hys: ye knowe also that it is not done of anger or hate, but of pure and entier loue. Abyde therfore for the LORDE in all your sufferynge, and truste wholy and inceassably in his mercy and helpe, how longe so euer he wythdraweth hymselfe and taryeth: And be fully persuaded that thys your sycknesse, (or suche other grefe) is not vnto death, but

Joh.ix.xi for the honoure of God, and your profyte & saluacion. ffor who so darre truste so in God, and beleue his promyses stedfastly, the same shall neuer dye, as Christe hymselfe sayeth: Yee and byndeth it also wyth an oth

Joh.viii that it be so in dede, sayenge: Uerely verely I saye vnto you: Yf ony man kepe my word, he shall neuer se death. And in another place

Joh.xi sayeth Christe: I am the resurrection and the lyfe. He that beleueth on me, shall lyue, though he were deade already: and who so euer lyueth & beleueth on me, shall neuer dye.

Kepe and holde sure thys comforte, and be bolde there vpon. ffor who so beleueth in Christe, shall not tayste of death, but is alreadye passed from death to lyfe. Euen as he wytnesseth of hymselfe, where he sayeth:

Joh.v Who so beleueth on me, hath euerlastynge

lyfe

lyfe. But thys is the lyfe euerlastynge: that they knowe the, that thou only arte the true God, & whom thou hast sente Jesus Christ. The lyfe euerlastyng begynneth here in this lyfe, & endureth euer. For who so hath Christ, the same truely hath very lyfe: for he hym selfe is the lyfe. Joh.xv. he is also the truth. What so euer he promyseth you, that shalbe yee, and not naye. he wyl abyde faste by his promyse, euen as he sayeth hymselfe: I wyll not take away my kyndnesse from hym, nor suffre my truth to fayle. I wyl not breake my conuenaunte, nor disanulle the thynge that is gone out of my lyppes. Joh.xvii. Psal. lxxxviii.

Howe wyfe chyldren and other frendes shalbe comforted, the husbonde beynge dead.

Seynge nowe that God hath called your husbonde, father or other good frende out of thys mysery into euerlastynge ioye, therfore shall ye receaue it wyllyngly: for it is hys worke. Repyne not therfore at hys worke, nother wepe agaynst his wyl, cõmitte y cause vnto hym, take it of his hande as a fa therly prouynge, & saye with Job: God hath

geuen vs hym, & hath taken hym agayn, the name of LORDE be blessed: as it was the LORDES wyll, so is it happened.

God almyghty wyll proue you as be dyd Job how ye wyll behaue youre selfe as he taketh out of youre syght the thynge ẏ ye loue. He wyll admytte well ynough ẏ ye be sorye. For it is seldome sene but a man (be he neuer so vyle, or of so lytle reputacion) hath euer a sondery gyfte wherewt he serued & profyted other. And ẏ same gyftes were not greatly regarded in a man whyle he lyued: for cõmunely we regarde lytle suche thynges as are present: but as soone as ẏ man is gone, so soone as ẏ vessel is spilte, thã begynne we to want the gyftes ẏ were cõteyned therin. Therfore is it no maruayle that we be sory for suche a gyfte of God, yf it be takẽ out of our syghte.

Ther is no membre of the body but it hath hys proper gyfte.

As longe as we vse men & the gyftes accordyng as they be ordeyned of God for our necessite, than do we well, and that can God suffre well ynough: But that we misvse thẽ, and make an ydoll of them, ẏ can not God suffre. For whan we put oure trust & cõforte in man, or ony other creature, than do we wrõge, & misvse ẏ same, and the curse cõmeth vpõ vs wherof it is wryttẽ Jerem. xvii. Cursed is the mã that putteth hys trust in man.

God is displeased wyth mysvsynge of hys gyftes

For all mans helpe is to be suffred only whau

wyll they be presente, and that we haue nede of them: but assoone as they are gone, than must we loke for other helpe, namely: God, lettynge go it that passeth awaye, thynkyng it to be tẽporal, faydynge at the twynklynge of an eye, and vanyte that is in thys worlde. We haue here no abydynge thyng, but must loke aboute for the thynge to come that endureth for euer.

For thys cause doth God draw & pull vs so from the creatures. And seynge he is oure true father, bridegrome & husbode, he can not (for he is stronge & gelous) abyde y we set oure hope, loue, or trust vpon ony creatur. Thys is the cause then that he doth take vs from the, and carryeth vs vpon hym selfe. For loke on what creature we haue moost hope, loue, and affection, that wyll he soonest take out of syght, yf he doth loue vs. And whan he hath surhe gelousy vpon vs, than doth he moost chefely declare hys lone towarde vs.

God can not abyde that we make much of creatures

By thys also it commeth that Christe Mathe. xviii. forbyddeth vs to call ony man father vpon earth; for we haue onely one father in heauen, namely God, which only can suffre vs to call or to haue ony mã vpon earth father: & that because we shulde depend and hange only vpõ hym, lokyng for al good of hym. For he wyll be y same that we maye

We ought to call no man father vpõ earth.

harde-

hardely truste vnto: seynge he can not, nor wyll fayle vs, & that because he is no earthly but an heauenly father. ffor thys cause than is that man blessed and happy, that putteth hys trust, hope, and confidence in the LORDE, as the prophete sayeth Psal. xxxiii.

ffynally yf whan nature fulfylleth hys course, man hath but cõtinual trauayl & mysery, & after that thys course of nature is ended & at rest, mã is eased of so great trauayl: we seme to hate rather thã to loue them that be departed yf we wold wish thẽ to be in this wretched worlde agayne. Moreouer in makyng so muche of oure frendes departed, and settyng so greate affection vpon them, wyshynge Gods worke not to be fulfylled vpon them, we blame God in hys wyll and worke: as though he knew not better what were best both for them and vs, than we. Iob. xiii

Let vs therfore set oure wyll in Gods wyll, and suffer hym to worke at hys pleasur. ffor he knoweth best what is both oure frendes and oure soules healthe.

FINIS.

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